

# Belgian Laces



## Luc Luyx, The Creator of the Euro Coins

The look of the side where the value of the coin is stamped was won by the Belgian artist: Luc Luyx.

His engraving will be the one all Europeans will carry in their pockets!

Luc Luyx was born in Aalst (Alost), Belgium and lives in Dendermonde (Termonde), Belgium. He received training as a computer programmer and works for "Monnaie Royale de Belgique" (Royal Money of Belgium), where he designs coins on the computer. He charges up to 24,000 Ecus (how much is that again?)

<http://www.wbcc-online.com/2002euro/2002euro.html>

[http://www.euro.fgov.be/practical/coins/coins-national/coins-nat\\_01f.htm](http://www.euro.fgov.be/practical/coins/coins-national/coins-nat_01f.htm)

# BELGIAN LACES

ISSN 1046-0462

Official Quarterly Bulletin of  
**THE BELGIAN RESEARCHERS**  
Belgian American Heritage Association  
Founded in 1976

Our principal objective is:  
**Keep the Belgian Heritage alive in our hearts and in the hearts of our posterity**

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January 10 - April 10 - July 10 - October 10

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\*All subscriptions are for the calendar year.\*

\*New subscribers receive the four issues of the current year, regardless when paid.\*

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January 1999.

Dear Members

First of all, let me tell you how I appreciated the kind words of support so many of you have had for me, and let me thank everyone who sent in articles or contributed in other ways in putting this issue together.

I am learning that your help is invaluable, as I could not possibly cover the many different backgrounds of our membership. We have members who are interested in research not only from all of Belgium's Provinces but also from many different states throughout the USA and Canada, not to mention those who are in Africa, and in Australia, or in France and other European countries

That makes for quite a task to find articles that will be of interest to everyone. The only way I can imagine ever being able to do so, is through your continued contribution of articles.

In this issue, you will find a lot about the glassworkers and the miners of the Hainaut Province.

As I research Indiana's Belgian Americans, I am discovering that those found on the Indiana census left family all over this continent.

Could I call on you to represent your regions like Mary Ann Defnet and Vickie Zabeau are already doing so well?

This would help correlate research and insure that everyone find something to help them in their research.

Leen and Pierre have been so kind to continue sending the quarterly to the printer for a while.

Postage is going up. I'm not sure what this will mean yet. The same with the pricing on the printing of the issues after we make the complete switch.

Many of us have had reason to complain in the past about late postal deliveries. I wish I could guarantee the prompt delivery of your magazines. Ask Leen and Pierre, it always seemed like the mailman ate mine up...

If you have any suggestions or any questions, please feel free to contact me either by mail, on the phone or by e-mail. It will be my pleasure to answer you.

I'm not sure about the status of renewals, but I hope you will remember to mail yours in to Leen and Pierre if you have not done this already: "Belgian Laces" depends on our financial support as well as our active participation.

For a theme this year, I thought it would be fitting to use "Landmarks". Landmarks in Time, in Place, in Progress...

That is why I chose to include an article on the Atomium.

Again, thank you all for all your help! Let's make 1999 count in History, rather than see it as a "count down year" to 2000! Until next time!

Régine

### **Welcome New Members!**

788\* Carolyn A. POELVOORDE Rock Island, IL

789\* Nancy B. EDDY Amherst, MA

790\* Barbara J. HURLEY Sarasota, FL

791\* Dolores KRUSE Coos Bay, OR

792\* Lavon FRAZIER Pullman, WA

793\* Sue LANDERS Pocasset, MA

794\* Joseph A. VANHAELST Newark, NY

795\* Christine PRUCHA Trevor, WI

796\* Henry H. GEUVENS, Jr East Peoria, IL

797\* Guy GALLEZ Fayt-lez-Manage Belgium

798\* Roberta BASTIN Mt. Clare, WV

799\* Sue YAMTICH, Munster, IN

800\* Linda GOLDEN, Tucson Arizona

### **IN MEMORIAM**

We were informed of the passing away of our member # 360 - Gaston Edward VAN HYFTE - born 6 February 1916 in Taunton Massachusetts - Entered rest 4 August 1998 in Parker Arizona.

### **GENEATICA© 98**

On November 28 and 29, from 10am to 6pm, the Historical and Archaeological Circle of Wavre, the Area - Royal Company and the Walloon-Brabant asbl, invited experienced genealogists and all those eager to know more about their ancestors, to come to the townhall of Wavre, to the first genealogy show in French-speaking Belgium:

### **GENEATICA© 98.**

The official opening of Geneatica 98 took place in the presence of the provincial and local authorities on November 27 at 7:30pm.

A number of genealogical circles of the Walloon Brabant but also of Flanders and of the Eastern Cantons were invited to present their achievements.

GENEATICA© 98's goal is to give these circles an opportunity to make themselves known, to progress in their work, and to create a cooperative effort for the publishing and exchange of information.

The Church of Jesus-Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, "the Mormons" was present throughout the weekend. They presented their meticulous work of safeguarding of the genealogical inheritance of humanity.

The introductions were made by Mr Michel Dorban, Professor at the UCL, Director of the Library of the Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences

There was a playing of a small film, a few minutes long, explaining what genealogy is.

There were presentations on various data processing genealogical programs and the potential of the use of the internet. People were invited to dive into *cyberspace* and discover genealogy forums and the *Bulletin Board System (BBS) of GENIWAL (Data-processing Genealogy Wallonia)* which offers 24hour access to its data bank which includes nearly 450,000 last names for French-speaking Belgium and as much for Dutch-speaking Belgium.

Once again, it will be established that the future belongs to the *cyber-genealogist*

He has served his country in many countries since 1956, last serving as ambassador of Belgium to Nigeria, Benin and Togo prior to coming to Chicago in 1991 with his wife and two daughters. He is a graduate of the Royal Atheneum of Antwerpen, his home city and the State University of Ghent, his major being Archaeology and History of Art. He especially enjoyed the menu at the Oakwood Country Club which served the Belgian delicacies such as head cheese, blood sausage, pickled herring, and a pâté which is described as "the best I have had on any continent I have visited."

The Rev. Robert E. LEE gave the invocation and the Rev. Francis ENGELS the closing prayer. Stephanie MOEN was guest violinist during the evening meal which featured Zalm met Mosterd Sauce en Bloemkool or Varkensgebraad en Rode Kool and Aardappel Kroketjes with Gebak met Grand marnier en Chocodemousse and of course, wijn and koffie. Chef John STURGIS prepared the meal for the large crowd.

### **TINY VILLAGE OF BRUSSELS WINS DISTINCTION ON NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

By Sue Hurley Special To The Post-Dispatch BRUSSELS  
Submitted by Jack LeChien

Tiny Brussels has been getting some big-time attention since the U.S. Department of the Interior's Illinois Historic Preservation Agency listed the Calhoun County village on the National Register of Historic Places.

Citing the contributions of 80 significant structures more than 50 years old, as well as the historic, social and commercial elements from Brussels' past, the prestigious designation was announced last month. Mayor Sarah Kinder was overwhelmed by the news.

"The word for me is ecstatic," Kinder said from the kitchen of the restored 1860 Queen Anne home she shares with her husband, Elden, and her son Christopher.

"Nothing here has ever been on the register before. After working on this for five months, talking to residents who shared information and photographs, it is a thrill."

Today's population is only about 125, and Kinder said that number was never much more than 200 even in the mid-19th century when traders pulled their fur-laden sleds across the frozen Mississippi River to outposts in St. Louis.

Brussels was named for the Rev. John Molitor, the first resident priest and a native of Brussels, Belgium, who died after spending a mere three months here in 1852. Brussels, which was strongly influenced by German immigrants, appointed its first postmaster in 1875. It wasn't long before scores of settlers moved into the region and began planting corn and wheat and apple orchards. Brussels homes often were constructed in American vernacular or Colonial styles. Many have tin roofs, and several have double front doors.

"I don't know what that's all about," said Kinder, pointing to the facade of her home, with its double doors on both the first and second stories. "I've heard it called a mother-in-law door and a honeymoon or company door. Whatever it is, it seems to be unique to this area. At least 15 other homes here have it, too." Today, the economy is mostly agricultural, with an emphasis on apples and peaches. Two schools, two banks, the Peachtree Cafe, the popular Wittmond Hotel, a funeral home and other small businesses line the short main drag. Cindy Linn compiled the research that accompanied the 50-page application historic-register packet. After working on it for five months, she and Kinder traveled to Rock Island, where they presented it and showed slides of Brussels to historic and architectural consultants who would later make their recommendations to the preservation agency. Linn, a Jerseyville native who is a history student at the University of Illinois at Springfield, worked on the Brussels project in lieu of writing a master's thesis. She said it was tough work. "There wasn't a lot of written information to work with," she said. "I found some materials on Calhoun

County, but nothing comprehensive on Brussels." Pulling together old newspaper articles, documents and family histories from the area finally paid off. "I'm exhilarated," Linn said. "People usually think of history as more academic, but it was great to be able to help the people in Brussels get national recognition. It's such a positive thing for them."

Kinder echoed the sentiments of most residents when she said that receiving the distinctive award filled her with pride. Notes and phone calls of congratulations have been pouring in from around the region since the IHPA announcement, but one in particular struck a chord with Kinder.

"One lady told me my father would be so proud," said Kinder, whose father, Raphael Behrens, had been active in politics in Hardin before he died in 1991. Kinder's mother, Rose Behrens, still lives in Hardin.

"Everything I'm hearing has been very good," she said. "Everyone seems so excited for us."

Residents are planning a celebration Sunday. A pancake breakfast at St. Mary's School will kick off the festivities at 8 a.m. At 1 p.m., a ceremony at the village's American Legion hall will include the unveiling of a certificate and two signs announcing the designation. Entertainment, including carnival games, crafts, music and house tours, will continue through the evening.

Further information is available from Kinder at 883-2680.

### **Northwest News :NORTHWEST NEWS OR :**

from Pearl Vanden Heede :

We are sorry we had to cancel the BBQ last summer due to my mother's illness, however her health is much improved and we've offered our farm the 1999 BBQ.!

We have chosen the following date : Saturday July 31, 1999 -  
More details will be in Laces1999.2 (May '99)

### **To and From:**

From Yvonne Stevens-Persijn from San Antonio, TX is the V.I.W. or "Flemings in the World" representative for Texas. (For more details on this family, and others from Texas, read "The Belgian-Americans of Texas")

San Antonio Texas, January 5 1999

Dear Pierre,

On October 13 1998, Robert and I were married 50 years and ( happy ones at that) . Our five children were going to give us a reception and we were going to renew our vows, it was to be held in our youngest daughter and husband's home, the yard and pool are like a fairy land. But as you may have heard, we had the flood of 100 years or some say 500 years. The location was changed to a party house, but it rained and rained, we had 12 1/2 inches of rain here at our home. Where the party was to be they had 14 1/2 inches, that's a lot of rain... roads and express way were closed... so call went out: " party canceled". I had four of my Belgian cousins who came down for the event, plus friends from Louisiana here. We were all heartbroken. Our family from Belgium here only for five days. We did so enjoy them.

Well the day went by, and the kids (I still call them that way, although their ages range from 49, 48, 46, 44 1/2, 43) still



wanted to have the party. So new announcements went out again: the first party was for October 17, the second November 14, same place, same priest.

But then guess what? My only brother Georges Stevens died on November 10th. buried Nov 13. He was our best man and had looked forward to our party, so we knew he wanted us to go ahead with it. His family said we should do it, and our family priest said we had to do it. It started with a Mass and all our children and 13 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter had parts in the Mass, two grandchildren played the flute. It was "Ave Maria" with flute and trumpet.

After that we had a sit-down dinner, a few drinks, lots of good wishes, and then: "The Flemish Folks Dancers" did a special dance to honor us. That was very special!

I can tell you it was a very Bitter Sweet Day.

My Mama will be 101 years old on January 18, 1999. Her name is Mathilde GIJSELINCK-STEVENSON. Her mind is clear as a bell, eyesight going bad as well as her hearing. My brother was her only son, and Mom is taking it hard; so we try to spend more time with her. She is now in a nursing home here in San Antonio. Born in Calcken, Belgium - January 18, 1898, the oldest of a family of 14 children, Mathilde came to the US on July 6, 1922, and still speaks Flemish.

Keep up your good work, and God bless you !

To Yvonne:

It sounds like you had some year! Congratulations to you both on your golden anniversary and to your mother on her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday! I hope she sees many more wonderful years! Please accept our sincere condolences on your brother's passing, and our hope that your Mother will be able to overcome her sadness. Thank you for your good wishes,

From Flora Dunn (Burnaby, BC, Canada)

I do enjoy all the interesting articles and stories in Belgian Laces. Also got a kick out of the peanut butter and Dijon mustard sandwiches in the Brindle family - Sounds intriguing! To Flora: That's the melting pot for you! Had to adjust to watching the kids put syrup on their crepes too...

From Ann Keller, (Chippewa Falls, WI):

Pierre and Leen, You've done such a beautiful job with Laces (because I'm the newsletter person for our county society) I understand the kinds of time, intensity and frustration that come with the job, so I hope you'll enjoy your "retirement"! Mille fois Merci!-

To Ann : Thanks to Regine Brindle, we have already started with the thorough enjoyment of our retirement!

From Leen Inghels (Bend, Or): Pierre and I want to thank all of you who sent us wonderful compliments for the work done with Laces and The Belgian Researchers over these last ten years. We are very grateful for the many expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the efforts that went into our work. At the same time you also sent us good luck-wishes for Regine! I'm sure she appreciates these as much as we do!

From Dr. Denis A. Bekaert (Beechgrove, TN) I use Belgian Laces in a Cultural Geography course that I teach at Middle Tennessee State University. The students particularly enjoy the emigrant stories told in the first person. We spent quite some time in the first few weeks of the course discussing the impact of the various cultures. Belgian Laces is a great help in this regard. Naturally, being of Belgian origins myself, I am

particularly happy to point out the great impact Belgians have had on the cultural development of the United States. () Enclosed is my check for another year of joyful reading ... thanks for all your efforts in bringing our Belgian heritage to life in yet another generation!

From Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter

### **Year 2000 and Your Computer**

A tiny diagnostic software utility may be downloaded free of charge from the website of the National Software testing Laboratories. Once extracted, this program is only 13,552 bytes. The free YMARK2000 program can be downloaded from [http://www.nstl.com/html/ymark\\_2000.html](http://www.nstl.com/html/ymark_2000.html) The program temporarily sets the computer's internal clock to read 10 seconds before the millenium and then monitors its ability to roll over.

YMARK2000 only checks your computer's hardware and BIOS, not its operating system or any application programs. If you run Microsoft Windows, you may or may not have a problem. The basic operating systems of Windows NT 4.0 and Windows 95 are supposedly Year 2000 compliant, but some of the included applications and utilities are not. For instance, the Scheduler utility that is included with Windows NT 4.0 is not Year 2000 compliant. It is just a utility, not the basic operating system. But it is included with NT4.0. Microsoft has promised that a free updated Y2K-compliant version will be available on their Web site. Windows3.1 and older revisions of Windows 95 may also need to be upgraded in order to avoid problems. Microsoft maintains a Website with information on the millenium readiness of all of its products

at: <http://www.microsoft.com/year2000>

Apple Macintosh computers have always been ready for the year 2000. Mac owners can feel smug once again their systems proved to be superior. Even the original Macs introduced in 1984 are fully Year 2000 compliant. (Actually, all Macs will trouble in the year 29,940. I don't think any of us need to be too concerned about that)

### **HELP WANTED!**

Hello All You good Belgian-Americans!

Do you have old letters? Newspaper clippings? Stories that make your ancestors more than just names and dates?

Father Jean DUCAT, with the help of several friends are getting ready for new publications.

In preparation are:

A book is under way about the Belgian emigrants from the Luxemburg and Lorraine areas.

Another is going to cover the Wisconsin Belgians.

If you can help in any way, please contact Father DUCAT at the e-mail address of his good friend and internet-ready associate, Mr WAUTHY: [francoise.wauthy@skynet.be](mailto:francoise.wauthy@skynet.be)

### **Reminder...**

Mail your 1999 dues in today, if you haven't done so yet...

**Wisconsin Corner : Area news****By MaryAnn Defnet**

The annual Peninsula Belgian-American Club Christmas party was held on Sunday December 6, and attended by 100 members and guests. One of the Directors of Unity Hospice was the special speaker. Numerous door prizes were awarded during the afternoon.

Forty-three members of the club enjoyed their biennial trip to Belgium in October. The weatherman was not cooperative (it rained 13 of 14 days!), but the members of our "sister" club, Wallonie-Wisconsin Société, provided a warm welcome and a lovely farewell dinner. The Provincial government of Brabant Wallon arranged a tour of Villers-la-

Ville (Cisterican Abbey ruins), Waterloo and Nivelles (the Basilica of St. Gertrude), as well as a dinner and reception at Bois-des-Reves with a visit by Governor Valmy Feaux. Many of the Club members took a 5-day trip to Prague, and a 2-day trip to London and Amsterdam. Others visited the villages of their ancestors, and historic spots in Belgium.

The Wallonie-Wisconsin Société is beginning preparations for their 1999 visit to the States, most likely in May. They will include a trip out west again, taking in more national parks, Las Vegas, and Hollywood!

**Declarations of Intention - Brown County, Wisconsin.**

(a continuing series)

When the Belgian immigrants arrived in Northeastern Wisconsin in the mid-1850's, the only Courthouse in the area was located at Green Bay, Brown County. Thus, most Declarations of Intention to become a Citizen of the United States were made here. Names are given as they appear, with corrections made in parentheses. The original Declarations are on file in the Archives of the Area Research center, University of Wisconsin/Green Bay.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Birth Year</b>	<b>Port</b>	<b>Arrival</b>	<b>Declaration</b>
John Franciscus TABORDON	1814	Green Bay	Jun 1856	7 Sep 1856
Francois Joseph TAISE (THEYS)	1826	New York	Mar 1856	4 Jun 1856
Jean Baties (Baptiste) TASQUIN	1825	New York	Apr 1856	21 May 1856
Charles THEBON (TEBON)	1824	Boston	Apr 1856	29 Apr 1856
Anatole THEYS	1837	New York	Dec 1855	8 Aug 1856
G.THIES (THEYS)	1828	New York	Jul 1856	19 Aug 1856
Clement THOMAS	1829	New York	Sep 1855	4 Nov 1856
Pascal THYS (THEYS)	1802	Boston	Jul 1856	8 Sep 1856
Mathieu TINTON	1791	New York	May 1856	13 Oct 1856
Clement TOMBAL	1834	New York	May 1856	13 Oct 1856
J.J.TONON	1829	New York	Apr 1856	10 Jul 1856
Joseph TONON	1811	Green Bay	Jun 1856	30 Jun 1856
C.J TONON	1819	Green Bay	Jun 1856	30 Jun 1856
H.J TORDEUR	1826	New York	Dec 1855	24 Jan 1856
E.J.TORDEUR	1826	New York	Dec 1855	25 Jun 1856
J.B. TRICOT	1807	Green Bay	Sep 1856	30 Sep 1856
Jean Martin UTPS ? (undecipherable)	1815	New York	Jul 1856	15 Aug 1856
C.VANCASTER	1814	New York	May 1856	30 May 1856
Julien VANCATER	1826	New York	Apr 1856	19 May 1856
Paul VANBEVER	1818	New York	May 1856	23 Jun 1856
Marie Joseph VANDEN DEMPT	1797	New York	Sep 1856	27 Oct 1856
Francis VANDENBERGH	1829	New York	Sep 1855	15 Feb 1856
J VANDERLINDEN	1835	Green Bay	Jun 1856	24 Dec 1856
Prosper VANDENACK	1830	New York	Sep 1855	26 May 1856
Guillaume VANDERVETE (?)	1834	Green Bay	Jun 1856	10 Jul 1856
A VANDEVETSE (VANDEVELDE)	1835	New York	Mar 1856	19 Apr 1856
Ferdinand VANDEVELDE	1839	New York	Mar 1856	15 Apr 1856
Charles VANDRESS (VANDRISSE)	1835	Green Bay	Jun 1855	4 Nov 1856
L.J. VANDERVEST	1824	New York	Jun 1855	10 Mar 1856
Louis VAN ESSCHE (VANES)	1832	New York	Apr 1856	7 Jul 1856
E. VANGINDERTAELN	1834	New York	Mar 1856	29 Apr 1856
Toussi (Toussaint) VAN HOVE	1820	New York	Oct 1854	22 Mar 1856
Jan Joseph VANDERMISSEN	1825	New York	Oct 1855	7 Jan 1856
Pierre VANESSE	1813	New York	Dec 1855	1 Jan 1856
Petrus VANNES	1834	New York	Jul 1855	4 Nov 1856
P VANNES	1803	New York	Jul 1855	4 Nov 1856
Joseph VANSURRY (?)	1825	New York	Mar 1856	21 Apr 1856
Michel J VERTGEEL (?)	1833	New York	May 1856	20 Oct 1856

John Joseph VICKMAN	1806	New York	May 1856	23 Jun 1856
J.C.VILLIESSE	1782	Detroit	Sep 1855	28 Mar 1856
E.M. VIRLEE	1820	New York	Apr 1856	19 May 1856
Eugene VILLERS	1812	New York	Apr 1856	9 May 1856
Melchoir VRANKEN	1805	New York	Sep 1856	27 Oct 1856
J.C WAEMAR	1801	New York	Apr 1856	30 May 1856
Guillaume WILLET	1831	Green Bay	Jun 1856	25 Aug 1856
Charles J. WILLAME	1827	New York	Jul 1856	21 Aug 1856
Desire J.WILLARD	1819	New York	Apr 1856	12 Oct 1856
Eugene WILLIQUET	1836	New York	Sep 1855	4 Nov 1856
J.J. WILLIQUET	1831	New York	Mar 1856	16 Sep 1856
Prosper WILLIQUET	1829	New York	Sep 1855	4 Nov 1856
C.J WILLIQUET	1798	New York	Jul 1856	18 Aug 1856
J.J WARNIER	1825	New York	Sep 1856	16 Oct 1856
L.Joseph WERY	1825	New York	May 1856	26 May 1856
Antoine WATNEM (?)	1812	Green Bay	Jun 1856	2 Jul 1856
Pierre Joseph WAUTERS	1810	New York	Nov 1855	11 Jan 1856
Eloi WAUTELET	1826	New York	Feb 1856	18 Oct 1856
J Pierre WERY	1791	New York	Oct 1855	20 Nov 1856
Charles Joseph WERY	1835	New York	Oct 1855	4 Nov 1856
Ignace ZEPHIRIN	1812	New York	Mar 1856	15 May 1856
J.B.RODAER	--	New York	Sep 1856	19 Oct 1856

There are 17 Declarations with totally unreadable names. This concludes the list for 1856, by far the longest list of Declarations by Belgian immigrants. We will begin those from 1857 in the next issue.

***Imagination and a good map are so helpful!***

Here are some **misspellings of village names** found on Naturalization papers in Brown County, Wisconsin. The correct spelling is in parentheses:

Arnoch (Ernage)	Neumere (Namur)
Ameau (Meux)	Owens (Ohain)
Ashe/Haith (Aische -en-Refail)	Overtasch (overijse)
Bolley (Bonlez)	Outerverlie/Ouderlee (Oud-Heverlee)
Coloo/Callooi/Calour (Kallo)	Roumilwae (Roux-Miroir)
Duacheau (Greze Doiceau)	Rhine (Rhisnes)
Engezais (Eghezee)	Sarisbar (Sart-Risbart)
Gibloo (Gembloux)	Schast (Chastree)
Genvo (Genval)	St Juratz-Wert (Sint Joris Weert)
Grand Ales (Grand Hallet or Grand Lez)	Turin/Turing/Turron (Tourinnes-la-Grosse or Tourinnes St Lambert)
Jondrea (Jandrain)	Turby Center (Thorembais St Trond)!!!
Leich (Leige)	
Naat/Nazen (Nethen)	

**For research in Brown Co., WI** From Kim Potier - Sturgeon Bay, WI

**Brown Co, WI. Library:** (920) 448-4400.

**- Cofrin Library -(the University of WI-Green Bay)**

<http://www.uwgb.edu/~library/forms/spc.html>

The Special Collections Department provides one hour of free research (plus photocopying and processing fees) to anyone who cannot visit us in person. An Extended Research Option is available for research requiring longer than the free hour. We take requests via mail, fax, phone, e-mail, and over the internet. If you would like to submit a research request, you may do so. Please explain your research request in a few words.

**IMPORTANT!!** Generally the records are arranged by geographic locations and/or time periods. Hence, to improve your research results, please be sure to indicate in which county or counties; general time periods and types of records you would like us to search for you. If you are unsure which counties our department covers, click here for a listing and ARC Network Map.

- **the County Clerks Office in Green Bay** (920)-448-4019.

**More New Books:**

**Jean Ducat** recently published, in French:

1 **"Passagers Belges Partis pour l'Amérique de 1833-1855"**  
(Belgian Passengers to America 1833-1855)

130 pages - Price 500 Belgian francs/\$13 + Shipping

2 **"Passagers Belges Partis pour l'Amérique en 1856"** -  
(Belgian Passengers to America in 1856)

125 pages - Price 500 Belgian Francs/\$13 + Shipping

Really indispensable books for any Belgian-American doing research in the United States.

Contact Mary Ann Defnet for more information.

253 Little Rd, Green Bay, WI 54301-1903

Shipping: -surface (40 days) \$5/ air (10days) \$10



## Letter Home

Submitted by Brian Gaber

At the time of his marriage Jean Charles VILLIESSE was shown as a "maker of wagons, cutters and carriages." Jean followed his son Jean Baptiste to America, arriving in Green Bay, WI in September 1855. Later several more of his children came to Green Bay. It is not clear if his wife came or not.

The following letter was sent from Jean Charles VILLIESSE to his wife and family upon his arrival in WI:

*Milwaukee, the 13th of September, 1855*

*My dear wife and all my children,*

*I have crossed the sea in good health on a British ship with 900 passengers on board, but since my arrival in America on the 1st of September I have caught diarrhea and can't seem to get rid of it.*

*I took a steamer from Quebec to Montréal, and from there to Toronto to Chicago. After many annoying obstacles and unplanned expenses I arrived in Chicago with only two dollars, therefore having no means to continue my trip to Green Bay. Due to my weak condition I found myself unable to accept work to earn the money needed to continue the trip. I came across a French speaking Canadian who was also going to Green Bay, I asked him if he would be kind enough to lend me enough money to reach Green Bay, assuring him of repayment as soon as we joined up with Baptiste. He agreed and we boarded a ship which berthed at Milwaukee instead of Green Bay. Here I spent two days searching for Brin's (?) son, who had to be here. By an extraordinary stroke of luck I ran across Baptiste who happened to be in Milwaukee. We will leave for Green Bay at 7:00 P.M. tonight.*

*Every town we crossed in America is very beautiful and the horses and cattle are magnificent, but the cost of living is very high.*

*Jean Baptiste told me he had given Eugène Dussart permission to catch small fish to put in his pond, as long as he was accompanied by a member of the household, to the others he did not. So you may tell the judge I am glad Eugène Dussart is at..... and I do not demand compensation.*

*We plan to clear some land, we met a young man from Tourinne who will help us to clear it. If you should want to rejoin us, you should choose to come in the winter as I am told the weather is better. If you intend to come you will need a lot of money and may sell (a list of land, houses, gardens, cattle and furniture follows, valued by Villiesse at 13,000 francs). With that amount Gognaux, Degeest and all of you may come here and live as well as the lords of our country.*

*It would be more to your advantage to come across England to Liverpool and from there to go by steamer. I was told the voyage costs 100 francs each and takes 12 to 13 days... you just have to bring along your own provisions for the crossing. This is much better than a sailboat, which takes 40 to 50 days.*

*When you get to Liverpool try and find someone who speaks French. If you can't, then ask the Belgian consul, who will explain the procedure.*

*Jean Baptiste and I send our kisses to you all.*

*J. C. Villiesse*

The General Land Office Records for Wisconsin show that Jean C. VILLIESSE received 80 acres of land on 22 February 1858 as follows: E<SE, Section 23, Township 25N, Range 22E, Block 0, Meridian CD 46.

The Brown Co. Census for the Town of Green Bay, 1860 lists following children:

VILLIESSE,     Henri, 32  
                  John, 28  
                  Albert, 18

MARCHANT,   Philomina, 23

As of 1996 the Belgian telephone books lists only one VILLIESSE family in the country.

## The Magic of Gas

Taken from  
"Interesting Episodes  
in the Early History of  
Marion and Grant  
County, Indiana"  
1966 ( p87-106)

Marion became an incorporated town in 1838, but even 40 years later it was a town of only 3,000 population. And, in fact, the growth continued at a snail's pace until the discovery of natural gas. Even the construction of a railroad, completed in 1867, did not result in

unusual population growth, as similar facilities had caused nearby county-seat towns to boom.

In fact the future of Marion looked gloomy, according to a report that appeared in a Marion paper. The writer had stated that "property was dead, and business was largely overdone." But it is the unexpected that always happens, and Marion's "future was assured by the happy discovery of gas, which made her famous all over the country."

Seven or eight years before the first successful gas well was drilled or even dreamed of in Marion and Grant County a few citizens of the muddy town of Findlay, Ohio, chipped in and hired a well-digger from the Pennsylvania oil region to bore underneath their town to see what they could find, and at a depth of about 1,000 feet a reservoir of natural gas was found. Even then, is it recorded that it took Findlay's citizens "several years to realize the real value of their discovery." But after those citizens had put this fuel to industrial use, every town in the Midwest became ambitious to have a well just like it.

Hence excitement was intense in Marion about 78 years ago (note: this was written in 1966) as preparations went forward for drilling a gas well. It was early in February 1887 that a few enterprising citizens of Marion contributed enough money to make experiment in the Marion area. The result was satisfactory beyond their fondest dreams. That initial test well came in at 882 feet; and the pressure measured 330 pounds to the inch, as a flow of one million cubic feet per day was attained.

A month later a second well was drilled to a depth of 887 feet, including 11 feet in the Trenton rock when gas was struck, and a well was brought in, which was capable of producing 2 million cubic feet of gas per day. In rapid succession additional wells were brought in, each at a slightly lower depth; each produced a great volume of gas.

By 1889, 15 wells had been drilled and the excited residents of the community envisioned a city of 50,000 population! And in order to speed the day, owners of the wells began a program of delivery which was scheduled to exhaust the supply within 2 decades after the original discovery.

The wanton waste of the valuable fuel was at such a tremendous rate as to be unbelievable. Every residence, business room, office, church, school and other buildings was supplied with gas, both for heat and light. No Marion residence was charged more than \$20 a year, and some were supplied as low as \$4 a year! And every manufacturing facility was supplied with gas without any cost whatsoever.

Today if a second supply of gas could be found at a greater depth, modern methods of production and marketing would be utilized; and the wanton waste that marked the gas boom period, would be conspicuous by its absence. But such thoughts

never entered the minds of the excited men who controlled the production and use of gas in that boom period. According to an article that appeared in the Marion Chronicle in 1905, "there was not an intelligent citizen of the entire gas belt, who had any doubt of the perpetuity of the gas supply for generations to come." Acting upon this belief, everyone wasted as much as he could. Strings of gas lights were placed across street intersections; and no effort was made to turn it off during daylight hours, so convinced were all residents that the supply was inexhaustible.

The promise of free fuel brought a number of industrial enterprises to the Marion community. These included: the Canton Glass Works (later the Canton Glass Co.); the Hub and Block factory; the Crosby Paper Co.; the Marion Paper Co.; the Marion Fruit Jar and Bottle Works; the Marion Cycle Works, which produced the famed Halladay-Temple Scorchers; the Marion Stove Works; the Skewer Works; the Westerman Rolling Mill; the Klein Furnace Co.; the Diamond Cracker factory (that never made a cracker); the Marion Pulp Co.; the Bonney Rapid Vice Works; the Indiana Pulp and Paper Co., and the Marion Malleable Iron Works (which was destined to continue in operation to the present day).

Other manufacturing organizations included: the Marion Opalescent Glass Factory; the Enterprise Boiler Works; the Marion Flint Glass factory; the Ditheridge Bros. lead glass factory, and the Studebaker and Allen Hardwood Lumber Mill. As a result - and it may be fact or fiction - it has been reliably reported that Marion grew to a city of 30,000 in less than 2 decades. And after the gas became exhausted, petroleum was discovered - and for a time - another period of growth occurred.

And as in the case of the gas discovery, the get-rich-quick speculators again literally flooded the community. The country west of what was then known as Bogue's Hill, within a few weeks, was covered with oil derricks - and all day and all night could be heard the throbbing of engines as they pumped the oil from the ground.

...The discoveries of both gas and oil served useful purposes in the substantial industrial development of the Marion area as well as the development of smaller towns within Grant County, which hitherto had been mere country villages. And since then gas - both manufactured and natural - has played a vital role in the development of Marion and Grant County, since the first plant to manufacture gas was established along the Mississinewa River at the end of Eleventh Street, in 1877, by Monroe Hill.

This manufactured product was replaced by natural gas when the gas boom bubble burst. It was in 1911 that the manufactured gas again was distributed until 1914, when natural gas was piped to the Marion and Grant Co. area from the West Virginia field. Four years later mixed gas, composed of 60% manufactured gas and 40% of the natural product, was distributed until 1941 when the city was again changed over to natural gas - this time supplied by the Panhandle Pipeline Co., from its Oklahoma and Texas fields.

Even though leaders of the Marion community were in error about the probable life span of the gas field in the Marion area 5 years after the discovery of gas, the community was fortunate in having the right kind of industrial leadership to make adequate use of the magical product so long as it was available.

...Two of the outstanding industrial leaders of this hectic period of Marion's industrial and business expansion period

were J.L.McCullough and J.Wood Wilson. The former had been engaged in the manufacture of fruit jars in Louisville, Kentucky, and later at Wheeling, West Virginia. He came to Marion in 1888 and established a glass factory which was called the Marion Fruit Jar and Bottle Co., in partnership with J.Wood Wilson, who had arrived in Marion in 1887.

Marion Fruit Jar was the second factory to be located in South Marion. These 2 men caused the site to be laid out in January 1888, and by March the following year the plant was "blowing glass." Their plant featured the "Dandy Oil Can" and the Mason fruit jar. It was said of these products that "they have become as staple upon the market as tea and coffee; and judging by the extent of the demand for the goods, they have become as generally indispensable."

...Thomas K. Sheldon, Fred G. Seltz and Charles E. Seltz organized the Marion Flint Glass and Bottle Co., in December 1887. The original contract provided for the construction of a 'ten-pot' plant; but it was constructed with 12 pots instead. Later 2 tanks were added, which proved to be adequate for ordinary flasks and prescription ware; but later an additional 10-pot furnace was installed to 'keep pace with the constantly increasing lines of new styles, and to keep in good condition. It was the only firm west of the Allegheny Mountains that produced lettered ware.'

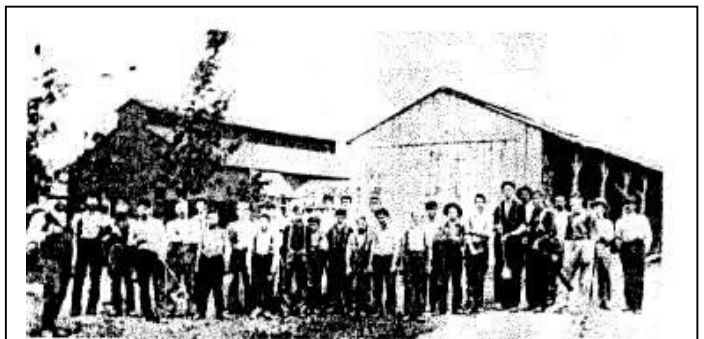
"In the course of time," it was recorded, "the company's growing trade demanded a further increase in capacity, and in the summer of 1892 the company established a 14-pot plant in Gas City. The entire capital stock of the company at both sites was \$100,000 (a tremendous capital for that period). The plant manufactured prescription vials, flasks, brandies, pickle ware and high grade lettered ware and private molds."

...The Canton Glass Works, which continued to operate in Marion until a few years ago, was another of the successful operations that was started during the gas period. It was moved to Marion from Canton, Ohio in 1890; it started with a 15-pot operation; but in the fall of 1892 the capacity was doubled. Produced at the plant were bar goods, drug sundries, tableware and novelties. The company controlled some of the most valuable patents in these lines.

...For weeks before that February in 1887 the people of the village of Marion had been watching the drilling operation. And when the steel bit broke through the Trenton rock, there was a gushing sound as natural gas issued from the steel casing. The second well was on West 3rd Street on land owned by Dr. William Lomax, one of the pioneer physicians of Marion. This well, like the first one, had crowds of watchers. But like the first well, the flow was not abundant.

The 3rd well was drilled along Nebraska Street near the residence of Dr. W.B. Wallace. This was the well that started everyone to dreaming about making a fortune overnight. This was the well that transformed Marion overnight from a little white-fenced village into a bustling money-mad city. Almost overnight its production leaped, and with it the population grew. Old records contained in the abstracts of the period suggest that the population of Marion "may grow to 50,000 or even 100,000!"

Then a truly huge well was struck on the Kiley farm. This roaring monster accidentally caught fire and for several days it burned and roared like a monster. At first all efforts to control the blaze were unavailing; but finally an expert gas well driller was brought here from the east and he succeeded in capping the pipe - and it was reported in the public press that "the entire populace of Marion breathed easier."



A group of workers at a Hartford City Glass Factory around 1900. Some of them hold their blow pipes with the "Metal" attached

#### 1900 US Census Grant County, Indiana

Last name,First	Rel.	Sx/Birth	St. Kids/Lvg.	Birth	Father/Mother	Immigr. Occupation
Center Twp.						
MEURIER,John B.	X	M/Dec 1831	S	Belgium	Belgium/Belgium	1859-Na
DECAMP,Martha	W	F/Aug 1874	S	Belgium	Belgium/Belgium	Na
ZELNER,Joseph	X	M/Aug 1858	M	England	England/England	1880-Na Wind.GlassBlower
Eugenie	W	F/Jan 1859	M 4/4	England	Belgium England	1880
Joseph	S	M/May 1882	S	OH	England England	Glass gatherer
Eugene	S	M/Jan 1884	S	OH	England England	Glass gatherer
Theodore	S	M/Mar 1885	S	OH	England England	at school
Victor	S	M/Jan 1892	S	OH	England England	
PERRY, Auguste	X	M/Dec 1850	M	Belgium	Belgium Belgium	1890-Na Window Glass Tenser
Florence	W	F/May 1840	M 3/3	Belgium	Belgium Belgium	1890
PREMAN, Joseph	Boarder	M/Mar 1860	S	Belgium	Belgium Belgium	1890-Na Window Glass Flattenner
CORS, Emanuel	X	M/Jun 1851	M	Belgium	Belgium Belgium	1877-Na Window Glass Gatherer
Hortense	W	F/Aug 1858	M 0	Belgium	Belgium Belgium	1877

Last Name	First	Rel.	Sx	Birthdate	St.	Kids/Lvg	Birthplace	Father	Mother	Immigr.	Occupation
Marion City											
3002	GILLET,	John	X	M	Sep 1854	S	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1882-Na	Flint Glass Blower
	Jessie	Sister	F	Jul 1856	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1882	
3401	DECAMP,	John	X	M	Apr 1844	M	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1878-Na	Glass gatherer
	Henrietta	W	F	Mar 1845	M	15/6	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1879	
	Leopold	S	M	Feb 1871	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1879-Na	Glass Gatherer
	Martha F.	D	F	Aug 1875	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1879	
	Julia	D	F	Feb 1877	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1879	
	Elisabeth R.	D	F	Apr 1883	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		
	John F.	S	M	Aug 1885	S		OH	Belgium	Belgium		at school
	Eugene	S	M	Jun 1888	S		OH	Belgium	Belgium		at school
Fairmont Twp. - Fairmont town											
					-1861						
	SCHMIDT,	Gus	X	M	Jun 1875	M	France	France	Spain	1892-Na	Glass Blower
	Pearl	W	F	Apr 1874	M	0	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890	
	STIBBS,	William	X	M	Sep 1849	M	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1880-Na	Glass Blower
	Jennie	W	F	May 1857	M		France	France	France	1880	
	Amelia	D	F	Apr 1860	S		France	Belgium	France	1880	
	Oscar	S	M	Mar 1883	S		PA	Belgium	France		
	Jess	S	M	Dec 1899	S		IN	Belgium	France		
	HART,	Joseph	X	M	Jul 1852	M	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890-Na	Glass Blower
	Jennie	W	F	Apr 1855	M	3/3	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890	
	Oscar	S	M	Jun 1884	S		NY	Belgium	Belgium		Day Laborer
	Willie	S	M	Sep 1898	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
	BEZIN,	Amil	X	M	May 1872	M	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890-Na	Glass Worker
	VANHOF,	Jennie	W	F	Oct 1876	M	0	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895
	BEZIN,	Henry	X	M	Aug 1862	M	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1883-Na	Glass worker
	DUVILEZ	Anna	W	F	Mar 1862	M	1/1	France	France	France	1889-Na
	Hector	S	M	Mar 1896	S		PA	Belgium	France		
	JARRO,	Cathrine	Mothe	F	Jan 1824	Wid: 2/1	France	Belgium	Belgium	1880	
Jefferson Twp.											
					-1861						
36112	TOUSSAINT,	Louis	X	M	Nov 1860	M-15	Belgium	Belgium	1883	1884-Na	Glass Blower
	Julia	W	F	Nov 1864	M-1: 3/3		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1883-Na	
	Ida	D	F	Nov 1886	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		at school
	Bertha	D	F	Nov 1887	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		at school
	Luke	S	M	Sep 1893	S		OH	Belgium	Belgium		at school
75/85	MERRITT,	... J.	X	M	Sep 1872	M-6	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889-Na	Window Glass Gatherer
	TILL,	Sullivan	Partne	M	Sep 1864	M-8	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889-Na	Window Glass Flatteners
	HANNON,	Joseph	Partne	M	Apr 1865	M-12	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889-Na	Window Glass Blower
Jefferson Twp. - Upland											
					-1861						
214/244	ANDRIS,	John	X	M	Aug 1849	M-27	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889-Pa	Glass Blower
	Mary L.	W	F	Aug 1850	M-2: 5/5		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1891	
	Bertha	D	F	Apr 1881	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1891	
215/245	TOUSSAINT,	Victor	X	M	Oct 1857	M-10	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889-Pa	Window Glass Cutter
	Clement	W	F	Nov 1869	M-11: 1/1		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890	
	Theodore	S	M	Aug 1891	S		OH	Belgium	Belgium		
231/261	JORIS,	Noel	X	M	Dec 1874	M-4	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1880-Na	Glass Gatherer
	Fannie	W	F	Apr 1879	M-4: 2/2		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1891	
	Aline	D	F	May 1898	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
	Alfred	S	M	Dec 1898	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		

	Last Name	First	Rel.	Sx	Birthdate	St.	Kids/Lvc	Birthplace	Father	Mother	Immigr.	Occupation
234/264	PACOT,	Alfred	X	M	Sep 1871	M-2		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889-Pa	Glass Blower
		Sophie A.	W	F	Jun 1875	M-2	1/1	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1891	
		Bertha	D	F	May 1890	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
240/270	DENKIT,	Ernest	X	M	Aug 1867	M-6		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1880-Na	Glass Gatherer
		Mary	W	F	Oct 1870	M-6	2/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1882	
		Ernest L.	S	M	May 1895	S		OH	Belgium	Belgium		
		Rose M.	D	F	Jun 1897	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium		
252/282	AGON,	Peter	X	M	Mar 1868	M-8		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892-Na	Glass cutter
		Olga	W	F	Dec 1867	M-8	1/1	PA	Belgium	Belgium		
		Olga	D	F	Aug 1894	S		PA	Belgium	PA		
Jefferson Twp.												
36015	ANDRE,	Emile	X	M	Feb 1870	M-6		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895-AI	Gatherer
		Martha	W	F	Mar 1872	M-6	0	France	France	France	1895	
15/15	LEFAVRE,	Eli	X	M	Apr 1864	M-6		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892-Pa	Glass Blower
		Adaline	W	F	May 1869	M-6	2/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890	
		Emile	S	M	Oct 1894	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
		Harman	S	M	May 1896	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
	LORIAUX,	Emile	B-I-L	M	May 1871	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890-Pa	Window Glass Blowe
26/27	DEWEZ,	Jules	none	M	Sep 1861	M		France	Belgium	Belgium	1896-Pa	Fireman - sailor
26/28	ROSSEAUX,	Leon	X	M	Dec 1863	M-6		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1884-Pa	Window Glass blowe
		Mary	W	F	May 1874	M-6	1/1	MA	Belgium	Belgium		
		Octave	S	M	Feb 1895	S		IN	Belgium	MA		
	LECHIEN,	Ora	Board	M	Apr 1869	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1872-Na	Window Glass Blowe
32/34	COLLETT,	Auguste	X	M	Mar 1869	M-6		France	Belgium	Belgium	1886-Na	Window Glass Blowe
		Jennie	W	F	Mar 1873	M-6	3/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890	
		Harmon	S	M	Mar 1895	S		IN	France	Belgium		
		Edmond	S	M	Jun 1899	S		IN	France	Belgium		
		Auguste Sr.	Father	M	Mar 1826	Wd		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892-Pa	capitalist
43/46	MAYER,	Joseph	X	M	Apr 1852	M-19		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890-Na	Window glass Blower
		Elvire	W	F	May 1852	M-19	2/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889	
		Joseph	S	M	Oct 1881	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889	Window Glass gather
		Julia	D	F	Jun 1883	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889	
58/61	BARTEAUX,	Edmond	X	M	Nov 1857	M-19		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1888-Pa	Hotel Keeper
		Juliet	W	F	May 1863	M-19	2/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1888	
		Edmond	S	M	Feb 1883	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1888	Glass cutter
		Georgie	S	M	May 1889	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		
	HANS,	Auguste	lodger	M	Sep 1877	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1894-AI	Flattener
59/62	DANIAUX,	Maria (?)	X	F	Feb 1846	Wd	4/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892	
		Jules	S	M	May 1879	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1898	Glass Cutter
		Felicia	D	F	Feb 1884	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1898	
59/63	LEROY,	Bennare	X	M	Mar 1868	M-7		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890-Na	Gatherer
		Aurelie	W	F	Aug 1871	M-7	3/3	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892	
		Zelma	D	F	Jul 1893	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		
		Eva	D	F	Dec 1895	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		
		Aurelia	S	M	Aug 1899	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
60/64	ANDRE,	Arthur	X	M	Sep 1859	M-12		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1884-Pa	Blower
		Augustin	W	F	Dec 1856	M-12	1/1	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1890	
		Rene	S	M	Jan 1892	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium		
61/65	GILLOT,	Camil	X	M	Feb 1864	M-7		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893-Pa	Blower
		Thnaise (?)	W	F	Dec 1860	M-7	1/1	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893	
		Nellie	D	F	Jun 1896	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		



	Last Name	First	Rel.	Sx.	Birthdate	St.	Kids/Lvg.	Birthplace	Father	Mother	Immigr.	Occupation
62/66	WEALOT,	Nestor	X	M	May 1857	M-19		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1894	Glass Blower
		Louise	W	F	May 1856	M-19	3/3	Belgium	France	France	1893	
		Hector	S	M	Jul 1880	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893	Gatherer
		Louisa	D	F	Sep 1882	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893	
		Amie	S	M	Mar 1884	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893	Snapper
		Mary	Mother	F	Sep 1826	Wd		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1899	
63/67	CARENA,	Leon	X	M	Jan 1852	M-17		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1891	Glass Cutter
		Belsamie	W	F	Aug 1868	M-17	0	Belgium	France	Belgium	1891	
		Oscar	Nephew	M	Dec 1879	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1898	Cutter
64/68	FRERE,	Emile	X	M	Apr 1865	M-10		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895-Pa	Blower
		Matilda	W	F	Jun 1861	M-10	4/3	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895	
		Fernande	D	F	Dec 1893	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895	
		Elmire	D	F	Jun 1895	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895	
		Lucy	D	F		61 S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
65/69	LEFEBVRE,	Hector	X	M	May 1865	M-7		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893-Pa	
		Zelie	W	F	Mar 1870	M-7	3/3	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895	
		Marshal	S	M	May 1893	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895	
		Ernest	S	M	Dec 1894	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1895	
		Edine	D	F	Apr 1899	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
66/70	BORMANS,	J.B.	X	M	Nov 1871	M-4		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1891-Pa	Blower
		Lizzie	W	F	Feb 1875	M-4	3/3	IN	IN	IN		
		Huber	S	M	Jan 1891	S		IN	Belgium	IN		
		Juo (?)	S	M	Apr 1897	S		IN	Belgium	IN		
		Marcell	S	M	Apr 1899	S		IN	Belgium	IN		
67/71	BORMANS,	Juo	X	M	Oct 1842	M-33		Belgium	Belgium	IN	1892	
		Julia	W	F	Aug 1842	M-33	3/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892	
		Joseph	S	M	Jul 1874	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892	Blower
68/72	BERGER,	Zavier	X	M	Sep 1860	M-13		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892	Gatherer
		Emma	W	F	Oct 1865	M-13	2/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893	
		Edgar	S	M	Jan 1888	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893	
		Stella	D	F	Nov 1889	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1893	
69/73	CABARET,	Emile	X	M	May 1866	M-10		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1894	Glass Blower
		Pauline	W	F	Feb 1867	M-10	6/4	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1894	
		Edmond	S	M	Feb 1891	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1894	
		Irene	D	F	Oct 1893	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1894	
		Alix	D	F	Aug 1895	S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
		Edgar	S	M		1 S		IN	Belgium	Belgium		
70/74	LEMAITRE,	Celeste (?)	X	F	Mar 1862	M-8		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1887-Pa	Yard Hand @ Gl. Fcty
		Mary	W	F	Apr 1868	M-8	2/2	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892	
			35916 D	F	Oct 1893	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		
		Jules	S	M	Oct 1894	S		PA	Belgium	Belgium		
	DEBENDE,	Carme	B-I-L	M	Jul 1869	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892-Pa	Tenderlayer Glass Fcty
		Jules	B-I-L	M	Apr 1874	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1892-Pa	Tenderlayer glass Fcty
74/78	ABRASSART,	Carsmar	X	M	Mar 1864	M-16		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889-Pa	Blacksmith @ Fcty
		Philamine	W	F	Jan 1867	M-16	5/2	France	France	France	1889	
		Carsmar	S	M	Aug 1885	S		France	Belgium	France	1889	
		Rudolph	S	M	Aug 1887	S		France	Belgium	France	1889	at school
78/83	JORIS,	Vital	Lodger	M	May 1866	S		Belgium	Belgium	France	1890-Pa	Bartender
79/84	BETTEGNIES,	Alfred	X	M	Oct 1852	M-20		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889	Glass Blower
		Josephine	W	F	Sep 1860	M-20	3/3	Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889	
		Hector	S	M	Apr 1880	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889	Glass gatherer
		Hannah	D	M	Feb 1883	S		Belgium	Belgium	Belgium	1889	

## Glass workers Union in Belgium and Emigration - 1882.

(excerpt from "Un Pays de Charleroi en Pennsylvanie" by Jean DUCAT)

### Glass Workers' Union in Belgium and Emigration.

Meanwhile, in Belgium especially, several industrial sectors were modernizing.

New techniques were shown preference and working conditions were changing. This brought about new perspectives between bosses and workers.

Finding the need to react the glass workers organized themselves with the help of Albert DELWARTE, Oscar FALLEUR and Xavier SCHMIDT. Tired of waiting, they formed the Glass workers' Union in April 1882. This Union of Belgian window glass workers was similar to the American Glass workers' Union, better known as the "Pittsburgh Assembly", Section 300 of the Knights of Labor.

The Belgian glass workers' Union established contact with glass workers all over the world so well that, since the creation of the "Glass workers' Federal Universal", in 1884, the Belgian union became the "Local Assembly" (L.A. 3628), otherwise known as EUREKA.

After the American Union financially assisted the Glass workers' Union in winning its first strike in 1884, they offered 600 to 700 vacant positions to the Belgian glass workers. Such increase in emigration benefited master-glass workers such Leopold MAMBOUR in Ohio and Captain E.A. of Ford City, Pennsylvania.

But toward the end of that year, the Belgian workers were sent to American factories where members of Local 300 were on strike. The ties between the two Union groups changed although they never severed the ties, as seen in following "caroloregien" (of Charleroi) suit proceedings.

It's in this tense social environment that were born the first glass cooperatives, thanks to whom many Walloon workers were hired.

### Social Troubles in Charleroi - 1886

In 1886, the Belgian glass blowers and their assistants began to see the basin-oven as the reason of their loss of status and the demeaning of their profession.

At the same time, a bad sale of coal products laid off miners. They started a strike with the help of the Glass Workers' Union. This strike became very violent and turned into a bloody riot in Roux on March 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 1886.

Accused of being at the chore of this tragedy, the Glass Workers' Union leadmen, O. FALLEUR and X. SCHMIDT were arrested and sentenced to 20 years of hard labor. In June 1888, thanks to the LEJEUNE Law, they were freed with condition.

### Emigration of Walloon Glass Workers favored by "L.A.300" - 1888

Because of the destruction of several glass factories, many workers fell victim to technical unemployment. Discouraged, scared, several hundreds decided to emigrate.

Under the protection of the "Knights of Labor", including the Pittsburgh section, they managed to bypass the American legislation of the "Foreign Act of 1885" which attempted to neutralize the recruiting of foreign workers.

From August 1st to the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1888, the Window Glass Workers' Universal Federation held court in Charleroi. O. FALLEUR, secretary of the L.A.300 represented the Belgian workers. The

delegates included a clause in their federal rules, which facilitated the hiring in the United States, of Belgian workers who were ostracized by their nation's leaders.

It's at the end of the Universal Convention that the banishment order came to O.FALLEUR. He left Jumet on August 15 to go to Trelon, France, then to England and finally the United States. The "caroloregienne" emigration continued through 1889 to such heights that an American journalist for The "Pittsburgh Times" wrote a complete article titled: "A Mecca for the Belgians".

### Creation of the New Glass Workers' Union -1894

From 1890 to 1903, the migratory flow slowed down a little, but it picked up again in 1904, following a strike started by the New Glass Workers' Union. Once again, glass workers fled in throngs, some to other European nations, the rest to the North American glass industry.

These joined the Belgian-Americans founders of about forty glass co-ops. In reality, this kind of enterprise was the glass blowers' response to the American Industrials' use of machines that blew the glass.

From then on, among the controlled passengers leaving Antwerp, we find Americans of Belgian origin going back to America after spending their vacation in Belgium and a smaller number of emigrants, on their way to join their family and friends already established in the United States.

### Belgian Americans in the workers and political associations in the United States -1904

From 1888 to 1904, almost all the Walloon workers who immigrated belonged to the powerful Knights of Labor Federation, that is, for as long as it retained its credibility.

#### **NEW BOOKS:**

"Rue par Rue: Charleroi, Hier et Aujourd'hui"

Dossier de la Nouvelle Gazette

(in French)

In about one hundred pages, the fascinating history of the streets of Charleroi, with several dozen pictures, old and new. A document filled with anecdotes about the past of this city.

To order for 200 francs each to pay to "La Nouvelle Gazette" 's account 360-0002260-35 in Charleroi, with the specific note: "Rues de Charleroi". Shipping charges in Belgium: 75 francs per copy.

In other countries ,or for large numbers contact our sales department at tel# 071/27.66.81

Website: <http://www.charline.be/gazette>

e-mail address: [gazette@charline.be](mailto:gazette@charline.be)

Mont sur Marchienne: Quick-Takes of Charleroi **The exhibit «Pays de Charleroi - mémoire photographique» - "Land of Charleroi - photographic memories" , proposed by the Museum of Photography retraces the life of what is called today the Urban Community of the Charleroi Region, from 1847 to 1945. The people who thought up this exhibit invite us on a memory tour : marriages, festivities, more or less well-known people, the army, the war..**

## "André WATERKEYN's Magic Cube."

By Régine BRINDLE

(based on articles found in the newspaper "Le Soir", by François ROBERT, William BOURTON, Daniel COUVREUR)

The Baron Moens de Fernig knew what he was looking for as a centerpiece for the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels: something that would combine modern physics and electronics and the peaceful use of atomic power. With this in mind he approached people at Fabrimétal where he met André WATERKEYN, now 80 y old.

He recalls: "I was a civil engineer. I chose the symbol of the metal industry for which I worked and suggested the design of a central cube of an iron atom enlarged 165 billion times. I proposed we place a restaurant at the very top, with a centrally located elevator and escalators in the other tubes. The baron Moens answered: 'Ok. You will create it all!'".

That task took André WATERKEYN 3 years: 18 months of planning and 18 months of actual building.

Like the Eiffel Tower, the Atomium was not meant to stand for more than the duration of the fair: 6 months. It turned out to be such a nice piece of architecture that a contract was signed to "extend its life" for 10 years, thus enabling the repayment of loans incurred for its construction. (The latest extension, for 50 years this time, will end in the year 2019.)

Financed by Fabrimétal, the Belgian Blast-Furnace and Steel works Group, and the Union of Non-Ferrous Metals industries, forged at Clabecq and Cockerill by the Brugeoise and Nivelles, assembled by the constructions groups of Jambes, this private contribution of the Belgian industrial sector to the 1958 World's Fair was to symbolize the new technical disciplines that would become part of everyday living.

Work began in March 1956.

First they reinforced the ground by placing 123 cement stakes. Then, a layer of cement of 12m in diameter, 2 m thick, weighing 500 ton was poured as a central foundation. Each sphere was coated with a very special aluminum: Peraluman 15, of exceptional brilliancy. Pots, placed at a 5 foot interval, lighted each sphere.

Alternating contacts turned the lights on and off to create a pulsating impression meant to represent the rotation of the electrons around the center of each atom of the iron crystal.

A Belgian flag flew at the top of the highest sphere, which housed a 140 seat restaurant, and offered a circular view-point, and allowed 250 people to fit comfortably behind 6 big plexiglass windows.

The fastest elevator in Europe carried visitors up the 102 meters in 5m/sec.

To help manage the flow of people and preserve the maximum level of security, it was decided to limit public access to 6 of the 9 spheres. The escalators inside the tubes, some of the longest in Europe, move about 3,000 visitors /hour.

Forty years later the electrons no longer function but the Atomium still stands (even if the spheres need a good shining). The ASBL Atomium manages the structure for the City of Brussels, the owner.

In preparation for Brussels 2000, the new cultural capital of Europe, Freddy THIELEMANS, president of the ASBL actively searches new options to provide for the much needed renovation and modifications. The cost of this restoration is estimated at 700 million francs. Funds will come both from the public and private sectors.

In 1958, 1.2 million people visited the Atomium. OPPENHEIMER and Walt DISNEY both came down from it, awed by what they saw.

Since then 400,000 visitors make a stop at the Atomium each year.

While in attendance at the Lisbon World's Fair, Armand DE DECKER, president of the Brussels Regional Parliament spoke of his hope to hold the 2008 World's fair in Brussels. By then Brussels should have become the capital of a reconciled Europe which would celebrate the Atomium's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

But, as many point out, first, Brussels 2000



### Folk traditions of Brussels and The Ardennes.

In 1999, the people of Brussels and The Ardennes invite you to discover with them the oldest, most charming and noblest of their traditions: masks and giants, religious and secular processions, witches and ancient soldiers, tales and legends!

For over one thousand years, throughout the seasons, the inhabitants of the Ardennes and Brussels have built a past rich in legends, beliefs and popular traditions. The ancestral culture of the regions lives through countless festivals. **Come and discover a country of legends and traditions. For a copy of the festivities program call the Belgian Tourist Office at: 212/758 81 30 or contact us at 780 Third Avenue, Suite 1501 New York NY 10017 -or via e-mail at:**

**[info@visitbelgium.com](mailto:info@visitbelgium.com)**

## **Born with the Caul\* - OSCAR GLAS (1899-1996)**

### **The Belgian-American or The American-Belgian - A Belgian who conquered Hollywood**

Submitted by Leen Inghels

\* Under this title Stefaan Van Laere, freelance writer- journalist, published the story of this interesting and intriguing "Gentse Avonturier" (adventurer from Ghent), who became a millionaire in the early American film industry as decorator-painter-sculptor of film theaters. Out of homesickness, he returned to Belgium after World-War II where he lived richly, painting for the pure pleasure of painting until the ripe-old age of 97.

Oscar Glas was born in "de Muide", a populous neighborhood of Ghent, Belgium as illegitimate son of a Textile-baron. He was raised by an unpretending woman by the name of Mause. Young Oscar showed a real talent for drawing, so he was sent to the Art Academy in Ghent. Money was not a big problem because his natural father provided for his education and other needs lavishly. Oscar seemed to be destined for good luck in everything he undertook. During World War one, when he was seventeen, he was called up for forced labor by the Germans, and sent to northern France to work on the railroads there. Soon he was noticed and released from forced labor. A German general realized his artistic talents and ordered him to make portraits and landscapes for the German officers and to decorate their bordellos with frescoes.

In 1926 Oscar Glas takes off on the great adventure: he decides to go to the United States of America. There he is taken in by a Hungarian Joseph Urban, AKA the Michelangelo of decorators. For Glas this meant the beginning of the American Dream. His arrival coincided with the explosion of the American film industry. When the sound film made its debuts in 1927, film theaters arise everywhere. These have to be decorated and adorned. The industry and the public rave about the style of this young Belgian artist, who uses Greek and Roman mythological figures lavishly.

Quickly he gains name and fame, not without the help of the Mafia; he becomes a regular at the offices and homes of the great studio bosses, like Paramount, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century Fox and Columbia; he meets Frank Sinatra, Errol Flynn, Marlon Brando and Cecil B. DeMille; but to his later and great regret, he did not accept an offer from Walt Disney to work in his studio. In his own Belgian Art Studio he employed 100 men.

In the book, "Born with the Caul", Stefaan Van Laere describes the America of the 20's, a world which will never return, in which every thing looks so threateningly simple ... is someone putting some obstacle in your way, just call the Mafia boss Secarpone and he will take care of the problem ....or so spoke Oscar Glas (who also mentioned that collaboration with de Mafia was a must, because "they either make you or break you").

America in that time was the land of promise, and this up to the time of the depression. But for Oscar even the depression didn't slow him down: diligently he leads his Belgian Arts Studio through these difficult times.

He led a life filled with adventure, passion and tragic, but became rich!

One big secret regret was that he sacrificed his real artistic talent to decorating theaters, painting for the market demand, for that which made him rich quickly, very rich. He made name as

a theater decorator, and was never considered an artist. His canvasses and sculptures were never appreciated by the art critics, nevertheless, he continued to paint until the morning of his death.

In 1930 Glas met Howard Hugues, the eccentric millionaire, who not only was a business man with flair but also some kind of an artist and art lover, and certainly a genius. Upon their first chance-encounter, Hugues asked to see a few of Oscar's sketches and gave him a few very important orders. The two became good friends, and although Hugues was not known for his sentimentality or consideration for others, he showed Oscar some real emotion when the latter confided in him telling him of his terrible home-sickness. Howard Hugues tapped Oscar on the shoulder and told him to quit the rat race and go home! So, right after the end of WW II, Oscar Glas returns home to Ghent, Belgium, a super-rich man wearing a white Stetson and driving a yellow & black Cadillac. Anyone who didn't know him personally, knew him by sight or hear-say. He loved a show, and loved to show-off. The man was a danger on the road, with his giant and colorful car on the rather narrow streets of his home town. He is known to have stopped his car on the street car rails and to invite the conductor and all the passengers to a beer in the street corner café. He was not afraid to spend his money: in the 60's and 70's he was a welcome visitor at student bashes, where he ordered champagne for everyone. On his 80th birthday he walked through downtown Ghent with women on his arm that were at least 40 years younger.

Oscar Glas' life story is really a colorful chronicle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The book is written in the first person, the author literally transposed himself in Oscar's body and mind. Van Laere visited Glas on a regular basis over a time span of two years and let him tell his story with a tape recorder registering every word. The older man, although hesitant at first, remembered and told every detail of his long life. He was not afraid of exaggerating here and there, or to tell a little lie left and right. He was not at the end of his stories yet when he died, in a way that was very typical for this extraordinary man: one hour before his death he was visited by a distant relative, with whom he enjoyed a good laugh, a glass of champagne and a large piece of fruit pie.

He had believed firmly that he would live to see the new century, and he planned to celebrate New Years eve 1999 with his friends in a Concord air plane above New York, watching a kaleidoscope of old movies featuring his old friends Marlon Brando, Frank Sinatra and Humphrey Bogart, waving to the Statue of Liberty while squandering expensive champagne.

Stefaan Van Laere, Met de Helm geboren, De Schaar, 1998. ISBN 90-73619-91-2

#### ***Reminder...***

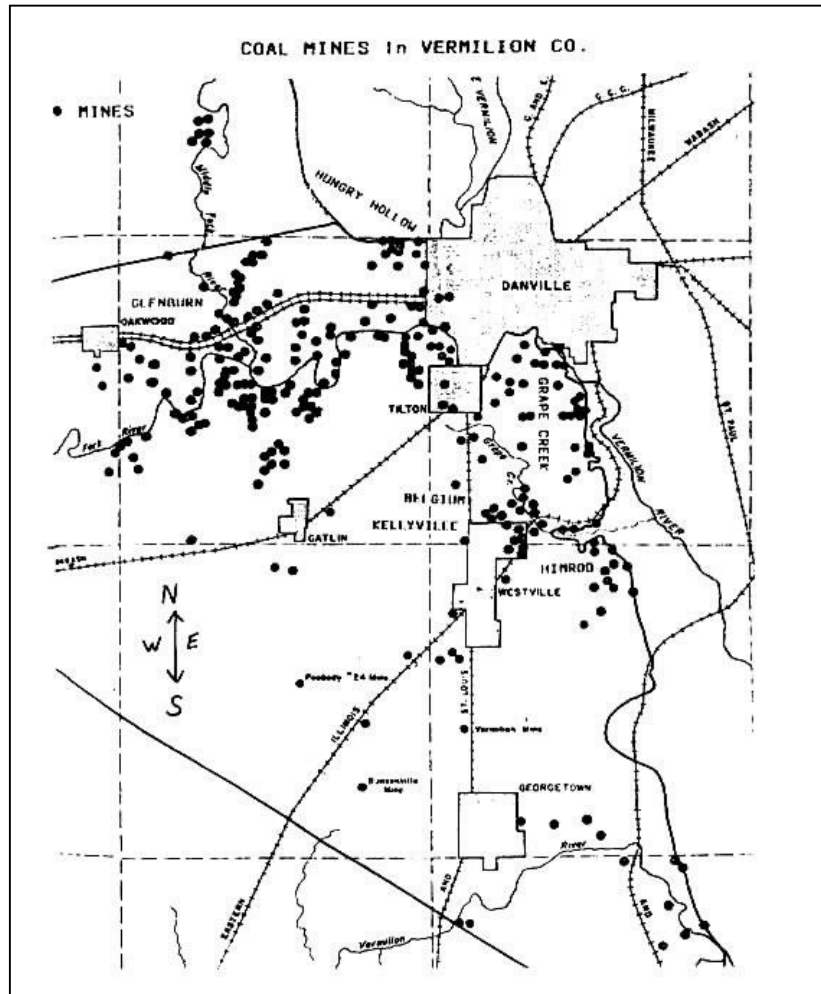
***Mail your 1999 dues in today, if you haven't done so yet...***

## Walloon Miners in North America

Written by Jean Ducat - translated by Régine Brindle

My first contact with the last remnants of the old coal mines developed by the Walloons in Illinois took place in 1986. That year, I also discovered in Iroquois Co., Illinois, descendants of Walloons who had settled there 130 years earlier. Among them I found some DUCAT cousins whom I met for the first time. In this great productive soybean and corn country, in the hopes of finding historical data, I visited the small village of Brussels. While taking us through, the mayor's daughter explained how

coal had attracted many Belgian miners to the little place. The townhall is a small one-room building which bears the insignia "BRUSSELS Town Hall". Not far from the Post Office, our guide introduced us to a "Belgian", as she said. It was the local mailman. He told us how his ancestor had come from the Borinage region, with others like him and that the section of the village where we stood earned the name of "Petit Cuesmes".



Our guide then left us in the hands of the community's oldest Belgian, Raymonde DETOURNAY, daughter and spouse of miners, survivor of the family designated on the VENESOEN Report as having left Antwerp on the Kroonland on November 12, 1904. The father was Vital DETOURNAY, of Marchienne. Docherie, born in 1866, with wife Hortense CALLEBAUT, born in 1873, and children: Vitaline (7), Raymonde (4), and Vital Jr. (3). Their destination was the mining area of Patton, Pennsylvania.

When she heard that my companion and I were visiting from Belgium, she called to us in her dialect: "Maria Dei, intrè tou tchut din m'cassine". As it was lunch time, we headed for the town's only restaurant. Raymonde had so much to tell us that she forgot to eat. Back to her place, she showed us countless pictures and told us all about her long life. She told us about the "Caroloregien" miners who had come to join the Borains who had been here since the American Civil War 1861-1865.

So that is how we began researching the Belgian miners in North America. Until then only one Belgian historian, Francis BALATE, had made mention of the first departure of Belgian miners to Illinois, in his study, "Recrutements en Belgique pour les troupes fédérales 1864-1865" (pp6-11). These beginnings were published in 1987 in the first publications of the newsletter "Emigration", known today as "Dentelle belge", editor Belgian American Heritage.



In short we can say that the master-miners of Illinois recruited miners in Belgium to replace the American miners who were soldiers in the war.

Louis DOCHEZ, a Belgian emigrant living in Illinois in 1856 was the recruiting agent and found much success in the Borinage, between 1863 and 1864. He was under the protection of Dr. HENROTIN, the Belgian Consul in Chicago, who wrote on January 1, 1859, to Charles ROGIER, Foreign Affairs Minister:

"... coal is the main mineral resource of Illinois. In view of the lack of qualified miners, the mine owners are considering bringing some from Belgium, for a very high pay... For this purpose, they have commissioned Louis DOCHEZ to go to Belgium..."

The first convoy (82 people) left on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1863, and the second (171 people) left on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1863. A majority of people from Cuesmes was directed to Danville, Illinois.

We also know that relations between the Belgian miners and their American bosses were often tense because the contract were rarely respected

In spite of these problems, the recruiting continued in Belgium and increased the number of emigrants from the Charleroi region, starting in 1880. The dollar, the high wages, and low prices for land were too attractive for the Belgian laid-off workers to resist.

#### Main States where Belgian miners emigrated.

Without giving precise locations in this article, we note the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri.

In Pennsylvania, we note Clearfield Co. and Washington Co. (a section of Cécil, is called Belgium Hill) and the Allegheny and Monongahela mines. In Nova Scotia, Canada, Inverness.

#### Hennuyers (People from the Hainaut) in Rich Hill, Missouri.

This year, two happy circumstances re-opened the study.

On one hand, with the help of Belgian American Internet users, descendants of 4 Hainaut families who settled in Rich Hill inquired about their ancestors: BONHIVERT, DUBRAY, MASURE, and NAHON. We first sent them the list of those we had found in the Belgian sources. Marilyn HOWE and Paulette MORRIS have done the leg work with the American census for Bates Co., and St Louis Co. MO., and Crawford Co., KS.

In the other hand, two Belgians who married Indiana natives are also helping with the research.

The first, Marie-Thérèse MARTIN, of Namur and the other, Régine BRINDLE, of Liege.

Both were quite so surprised to find so many Belgians settlers that they have begun research in their local archives.

I hope they soon learn the history of the Rich Hill mines.

### Letters from Emigrants -continued

Document #11

Ford City 7 February 1912.

Dear Cousin Louisa,

I don't know how to start a letter, it's been so long since I have written in French the words don't come (...)

Desire was not operated yet (...) What is holding him back is that he is taking an accounting class at a business college. His boss lets him work half-days, in the



morning. He does not want to fall behind (...) We have not seen Arthur since he got married. They live rather far from here, and his in-laws have been sick a lot (...) I was invited to a dance on the 14th. The committee is made up of many young girls (...) The girls have to choose their partner and lead while they dance. They do that every leap year. The girls even get to propose marriage, even though few dare to. If I find somebody I like I will ask him to the dance.

We have a telephone in our house, and all you have to do is dial the number. It will be easier to ask him on the phone, I won't be so scared as if I have to face him. I just listened to a conversation between a girl and Desire.

Desire is at the store and the girl is as far away as from your place to Charleroi.

Marie is at the Centrale all night and as the girl was calling Desire at the store, Marie listened and then put me on the line too,, I heard everything..

I will leave the rest of the page for Mom to write you. We send you our love, and Desire's especially. Let us know if you receive the dollar Desire is sending Uncle for him to get a beer with our wishes that he has regained his health.

I must tell you that winter in America is hard. We received a letter from Courcelles saying it had not snowed in Belgium yet. It's funny because the temperatures are the same here (...) We have had bad weather this year, it freezes then it snows. Every day since New Year (...) we can even cross the river (Allegheny) on the ice with wagons it is so solid, and the river is almost a mile wide. Still I am not any colder than when I lived in Belgium and took dinner to the Sart-les-Moines. The wind was colder and I was colder. Fires must be kept burning in the homes night and day, Mom puts hot-water bottles in the beds every night, and Desire says he likes that better than a wife.

Dear Louisa, you are not the only one to be gaining weight (...) you should not take vinegar as it thins the blood and makes one anemic. To lose weight one must travel as much as possible and stay a little hungry, which I can not do (...) If we had nothing else to do, we'd go out for walks and if we were rich, but instead we will have to work all our lives. There is nobody offering

to take care of us. If I had as many old bachelors around as you have, I'd jump on the chance. Is Anatole not yet spoken for? If he isn't don't let another steal him away from you. For my part, I don't get to see those I might be interested in every day.

In my next letter, there will be a dollar for the seeds.

Best from all of us,

Aline F.

Document #12

Ford City, 11 March 1912.

Dear Uncle, Aunt and Cousin,

I am glad to be able to tell you that Desire is well; we could hope he won't need the surgery. He drinks a glass of olive oil with almost every meal. Will that make it go away, we must try. No one is surprised by this illness around here. It is contagious, there is so much of it. (?) We all had the flu, Alex started, then me, then Aline. This past week there has been a lot of sick people. I don't know if it's because winter has been so hard and so long. We have had snow since October and it had not frozen like this in a long time. The papers say it's not been this cold in 25 years. We won't be getting to the gardening within the month.

Dear Cousin Louisa I always count on your kindness to send me seed: 50g of carrots, 25 leeks, 25 onions, 25 rutabagas (?), 25 lettuce, 25 spinach, 25 cabbage, 10 endives (lettuce type), 10 endives. If it's possible could you also include some small red daisies that grow in the spring. I am curious about how the Queen's flower is (?), they talk about it so much in the paper. I told you that if my uncle likes tomato seeds, I will send him some. I can't in this letter because of the dollar. I fear the curiosity of those at the post office(...)

It's been a year since I last wrote Honorine, I don't know what she must think of me, and yet I don't forget her.

Once you put something off you never get it done.

Best to Uncle, Aunt, without forgetting Aunt Marie Therese and the little Desire (we call him like that even though he is quite a young man now)

How I wish to see you all again,

Best to all,

Aline

### Coal Mining in Rich Hill, Missouri.

Excerpt from "The Town That Coal Built: Rich Hill, Missouri - 1880-1980"

published by the Rich Hill Lions Club

..."Much of the information for this article was obtained by a student interview with the late Steve CAMPBELL Jr. The deep mines around Rich Hill employed many hundreds of men. The only way to find these old mine shafts is to go to the wooded areas and look for dirt dumps or the mounds where the refuse was dumped. Material as fire clay off the bottom of the mine or shale from the roof was sent out of these mines in small cars to be pushed out and dumped in these big mounds. The mounds remain to remind us of the Rich Hill area of the Coal Era. South of town many of the mines had numbers as 15-19-17-23-21-4-5-7, others had names as Wise, Eureka, Jones Coal Company, Hall Coal Company, Bert Miller Company and McCombs Mines.



West and north of Rich Hill were two mines operated at New Home. The second mine at New Home blew up with a gas explosion that killed five or six men. This second mine at New Home left a very rich vein of coal 4 1/2 to 6 feet thick with 75 to 100 acres of coal. The old mine at New Home (the first one sank) blew up and killed a number of miners. This mine was reopened by Steve CAMPBELL, Sr. for the New Home Coal Company. These two mines were treacherous, dangerous mines with too much gas to be operated with safety. They were deep mines between 300 and 400 feet in the earth. One mine at New Home had a daily output of 800 tons for a considerable time. The average life for all Rich Hill coal mines would be only a few years, perhaps five, and then the same company would sink on a new vein or lease.

... All coal mines were worked in the same pattern. All were hand worked and all entries or tunnels were driven by a skilled man with a pick. This entry driver would often cut 5 to 6 feet in one day in the solid coal. He would make a narrow channel wide enough for his shoulders. Then he would set up a stand place or attach a thread bar to a bit and drill a couple of holes in each side of his cutting. In one month he was inside 130 feet. In 130 feet he had made room for four miners to turn rooms off his tunnel. These so-called rooms could be 30 feet wide and here they really shot the coal loose. Usually the grades were known as mine run and lump, big chunks sometimes 100 pounds or more. Each mine had its own camp and houses. The miners' homes were not mansions, but many of the small homes in Rich Hill were built by the coal companies for the miners. Usually all were built about alike with three rooms. There were as many as 15 camps at one time in and around Rich Hill.

The miners were thorough and followed the veins of coal and pulled out the pillars when they were through. This kind of mining gave work to many men and did not tear up the farmland. The only reminder of these mines is the occasional sinkhole where the props have given way.

These companies had all their own railway tracks and switches.

Grading for the tracks was often quite extensive. Building a grade one mile or more in length and doing it all with horses and small slips was indeed quite a chore. Pay for driving these teams was \$1.00 to \$1.25 for ten hours.

A scale of wages through the years will show that the pay scale was really not big.

1897 - \$1.50 per day

1910 - \$2.00 per day

1914 - \$2.84 per day

1916 - \$2.60 per day

1917 - \$3.85 per day

1918 - \$5.00 per day (war wages)

1919 - \$7.50 per day

1929 - \$2.00 per day (no more union in Rich Hill)

1930 - \$2.50 per day

A coal miner needed a strong back, but the skillful miner was the one with the most takehome pay. To be skilled meant to be in danger. Skilled men were gas men and shot firers who lighted all the shots for all the miners after 4 o'clock. A good track layer and timber man received good pay. They earned every cent. Everyone was concerned about gas and a good roof so these fellows were in demand. More than a third of the miners were paid by the day; all the rest were paid by the ton. In the day of the coal mines you worked for the coal companies, or you didn't have a good job

## Belgian Miners in Rich Hill, Missouri - 1878-1905

Submitted by Jean Ducat

relat.	Last Name	First Name	Year born	in	Left from	in
H	BELIER	Grégoire	1860	Belgium	Belgium	1890
W	N	Joséphine	1866	Belgium	Belgium	1890
H	BELIER	Paul	1851	Belgium	Belgium	1878
W	N	Marie	1852	Belgium	Belgium	1879
c	BELIER	Z	1877	Belgium	Belgium	1879
H	BERGER	Emile	1869	Jumet	Jumet	1887
W	HITELET	Anne	1870	Gosselies	Jumet	1887
S	BERGER	Hubert Jr	1862	Gilly	Gilly	1886
H	BERGER	Isidore	1867	Gilly	Gilly	1886
W	N	Guillemine	1876	Gilly	Gilly	1891
S	BERGER	Léon	1835	Jumet	Jumet	1887
S	BERGER	Emile	1859	Lodelinsart	Lodelinsart	1888
H	BERGER	Valentin	1864	Jumet	Jumet	1888
W	PREAUX	Apolline	1872	Jumet	Jumet	1900
S	BOISDRENGHIEN	Fernand	1876	Monceau sur Sambre	Jumet	1892
H	BONHIVERT	Augustin	1851	Marchienne au Pont	Marchienne au Pont	1880
W	PAYS	Orélie	1854	Jumet	Marchienne au Pont	1880
c	BONHIVERT	Céline	1873	Marchienne au Pont	Marchienne au Pont	1880
H	BOUCHER	Auguste	ca 1845	Marchienne	Marchienne	1886
W	TERLEROUX	Rosalie	ca 1845	Marchienne	Marchienne	1886
c	BOUCHER	Noël	*	Marchienne	Marchienne	1886
H	BOUTEILLIEZ	Pierre	1858	Roux	Jumet	1888
W	DEPRET	Philomène	1863	Jumet	Jumet	1888
c1	BOUTEILLIEZ	Octavie	1885	Jumet	Jumet	1888
c2	BOUTEILLIEZ	Aimé	1887	Jumet	Jumet	1888
S	BOUTEILLIEZ	Louise	1847	Tubize	Roux	1901
H	BRONCHAIN	Hubert	1876	Belgium	Belgium	1879
W	N	Philomène	1877	Belgium	Belgium	1879
H	BROWET	Gustave	*	*	*	d.in Belgium
W	PELERIN	Clémentine	1825	Vieux Genappe	Dampremy	1890
c1	BROWET	Joseph G .	1855	Dampremy	Dampremy	1890
c2	BROWET	Jean A.	1865	Montignies sur Sambre	Dampremy	1890
c3	BROWET	Jean-Baptiste	1881	Dampremy	Dampremy	1890
S	BRUMULE	Agnès	1836	Belgium	Belgium	1886
H	BUSET	Charles	1851	Lodelinsart	Dampremy	1889
W	CHERON	M. Alexandre	1851	Laneffe	Dampremy	1890
c1	SAVOIT	Alexandrine	1871	Dampremy	Dampremy	1890
c2	SAVOIT	M. Thérèse	1873	Marchienne	Dampremy	1890
c3	BUSET	Charles L,	1882	Roux	Dampremy	1890
c4	BUSET	Jean Jh.	1884	Jumet	Dampremy	1890
H	CAMBRA	Benoni	1873	Farciennes	Farciennes	1901
W	DESSY	Flore	1877	Chatelineau	Farciennes	1902
c	CAMBRA	Claire	1895	Chatelineau	Farciennes	1902
H	CASTERMAN	Jules	1864	Marchienne	Roux	1889
W	LATINIS	Céline	1868	Landelies	Roux	1889
c	CASTERMAN	Céleste	1888	Roux	Roux	1889
S	CITRON	Henri	1872	Belgium	Belgium	1887
H	CITRON	Jean	1875	Belgium	Belgium	1888

W	N	Emma	1876	Belgium	Belgium	1881
<b>H</b>	<b>COLLARD</b>	Nestor	*1855	Belgium	Belgium	1887
W	N	Hortence	*1859	Belgium	Belgium	1887
c1	COLLARD	Pierre	*1880	Belgium	Belgium	1887
c2	COLLARD	Nestor Jr	1881	Belgium	Belgium	1887
c3	COLLARD	Henry	1883	Belgium	Belgium	1887
c4	COLLARD	Hector	1885	Belgium	Belgium	1887
<b>H</b>	<b>COLLARD</b>	Olivier	1867	Roux	Roux	1881
W	LOTTE	Arina	1868	Roux	Roux	1881
<b>H</b>	<b>COLLARD</b>	Pierre	1860	Jumet	Dampremy	1888
W	MOREAU	Maria	1868	Jumet	Dampremy	1888
W2	N	Delphine	1879	Belgium	Belgium	1889
<b>H</b>	<b>COYETTE</b>	Jules	1865	Roux	Roux	1893
W	FONTAINE	M. Catherine	1867	Roux	Roux	1893
c1	COYETTE	Julia	1887	Roux	Roux	1893
c2	COYETTE	Pierre	1890	Roux	Roux	1893
<b>H</b>	<b>COYETTE</b>	H. Joseph	1858	Jumet	Jumet	1892
W	MARTIN	Apolline	1858	Lodelinsart	Jumet	1892
c	DESCHAMP	Albert	1880	Maubeuge (F)	Jumet	1892
<b>H</b>	<b>DAMS</b>	Philémon	1842	Belgium	Belgium	1888
W	N	Joséphine	1845	Belgium	Belgium	1890
c	DAMS	Lorin	1884	Belgium	Belgium	1888
<b>H</b>	<b>DAVID</b>	Edmond	1851	Belgium	Belgium	1892
W	N	Emma	1852	Belgium	Belgium	1892
c1	DAVID	Edmond Jr	1883	Belgium	Belgium	1892
c2	DAVID	Rachèle	1885	Belgium	Belgium	1892
c3	DAVID	Léa	1887	Belgium	Belgium	1892
<b>H</b>	<b>DEMARET</b>	Aimé	1849	Roux	Jumet	1879
W	FRANCOIS	Célinie	1849	Braine-Le-Comte	Jumet	1879
<b>S</b>	<b>DEMOULIN</b>	Elisée	1878	Courcelles	Courcelles	1902
<b>S</b>	<b>DENAYER</b>	Auguste	1845	Belgium	Belgium	1880
<b>H</b>	<b>DENAYER</b>	Hippolyte	1840	Jumet	Jumet	1879
W	MONSEU	Augustine	1844	Jumet	Jumet	1879
c1	DENAYER	Pierre	1867	Jumet	Jumet	1879
c2	DENAYER	H. Joseph	1869	Jumet	Jumet	1879
c3	DENAYER	Ambroise	1875	Jumet	Jumet	1879
<b>S</b>	<b>DENOLD (?)</b>	Charles	1861	Belgium	Belgium	1888
<b>H</b>	<b>DEPRET</b>	Antoine	1857	Jumet	Roux	1886
W	EVARD	Noémie	*	Jumet	Roux	1887
c1	DEPRET	Antoine Jr	1877	Roux	Roux	1887
c2	DEPRET	Emile	1878	Roux	Roux	1887
c3	DEPRET	Pierre	1886	Roux	Roux	1887
W	PETIT	Joséphine	*	Roux	Roux	1887
<b>S</b>	<b>DERIDER</b>	Liévin	*	Roux	Roux	1897
<b>H</b>	<b>DESHAYE</b>	Hubert	*	Montignies sur Sambre	Roux	1894
W	LETELLIER	M. Clémence	1871	Montignies sur Sambre	Roux	1894
c	DESHAYE	Joseph	1892	Roux	Roux	1894
<b>S</b>	<b>DESSY</b>	Camille	1877	Pont-de-loup	Pont-de-Loup	1903
<b>H</b>	<b>DUBOIS</b>	Aimé	1870	Rebecq Rognon	Jumet	1893
W	STANSON	Joséphine	1869	Jumet	Jumet	1893
c	DUBOIS	Joséphine	1892	Jumet	Jumet	1893
<b>H</b>	<b>DUBOIS</b>	Samuel	1873	Roux	Roux	1903
W	MAERTENS	Hida	1882	Roux	Roux	1903
c	DUBOIS	Oscar	1903	Roux	Roux	1903
<b>H</b>	<b>DUBRAY</b>	Antoine-Jean	ca1850	Roux	Roux	1889
W	MARTIN	Adonise Céline	ca1855	Roux	Roux	1889
<b>H</b>	<b>DUBRA(Y) ?</b>	Pierre	1849	Belgium	Belgium	1890
W	N	Marie	1845	Belgium	Belgium	1890
<b>H</b>	<b>FALISE</b>	Auguste	1861	Marchienne Pont	Marchienne Pont	1889
W	HAYET	Angel	1865	Marchienne Pont	Marchienne Pont	1890
c	FALISE	Joseph	1889	Marchienne Pont	Marchienne Pont	1890
<b>H</b>	<b>FARRER</b>	Pierre	1860	Belgium	Belgium	1895
W	N	Marie	1873	Belgium	Belgium	1890
<b>H</b>	<b>FRERE</b>	Noël	1865	Jumet	Jumet	1893
W	BROGNAUX	Elvire	1863	Jumet	Jumet	1894
c	FRERE	Fernand	1891	Jumet	Jumet	1894
<b>S</b>	<b>GORET</b>	Emile	*	Courcelles ?	Courcelles ?	1888
<b>H</b>	<b>GRANDJEAN</b>	Antoine	1859	Belgium	Belgium	1887

				21	Belgian Laces Vol. 21 #78		
W	N	Annie	1860	Belgium	Belgium	1887	
c1	GRANDJEAN	Antoine	1884	Belgium	Belgium	1887	
c2	GRANDJEAN	Cidonie	1886	Belgium	Belgium	1887	
H	<b>GUILBERT</b>	Pierre	1863	Jumet	Jumet	1893	
W	ROUSSEAU	Rosine	1867	Jumet	Jumet	1893	
c1	GUILBERT	Zénaïde	1890	Jumet	Jumet	1893	
c2	GUILBERT	Eugénie	1891	Jumet	Jumet	1893	
c3	GUILBERT	Henri-Dart,	1892	Jumet	Jumet	1893	
H	<b>HANCART</b>	Adolphe	1852	Gilly	Dampremy	1900	
W	MARTIN	Henriette	*	*	*	*	
c	HANCART	Jules	1885	Charleroi	Dampremy	1900	
H	<b>HUBERT</b>	Gustave	1849	F	Jumet	1887	
W	VANDERMOUSEN,	Rosalie	1846	Papignies	Jumet	1887	
c1	HUBERT	Emile	1883	Jumet	Jumet	1887	
c2	HUBERT	Joséphine	1884	Jumet	Jumet	1887	
S	<b>HULET</b>	Charles	1875	Marchienne	Marchienne	1905	
Bro	JANSENS	Jean-Baptiste	1864	Farciennes	Farciennes	1902	
HBro	<b>JANSENS</b>	Théophile	1869	Farciennes	Farciennes	1892	
W	N	Maria	1872	Farciennes	Farciennes	1892	
c	JANSENS	Roland	1892	Farciennes	Farciennes	1892	
H	<b>JUMET</b>	Emile	1863	Jumet	Jumet	1887	
W	COYETTE	Constance	1867	Jumet	Jumet	1887	
c	JUMET	Adelie	1886	Jumet	Jumet	1887	
H	<b>JUMET</b>	Emmanuel	1857	Dampremy	Dampremy	1889	
W	SAY	Léopoldine	*	Marchienne Pont	Dampremy	1889	
c	JUMET	Bertha	1888	Dampremy	Dampremy	1889	
H	<b>JUMET</b>	Remy	1859	Dampremy	Dampremy	1892	
W	VANDERMEULEN, M.	Thérèse	1864	Jumet	Dampremy	1892	
c1	JUMET	Apolline	1883	Jumet	Dampremy	1892	
c2	JUMET	Herman	1885	Dampremy	Dampremy	1892	
c3	JUMET	Emilie	1890	Dampremy	Dampremy	1892	
c4	JUMET	Fernande	1890	Dampremy	Dampremy	1892	
c5	JUMET	Remy	1890	Dampremy	Dampremy	1892	
c6	JUMET	Fernand	1892	Dampremy	Dampremy	1892	
H	<b>KNAP</b>	Pierre	*	Molenbeek	Jumet	1888	
W	MASQUELIER	Anna	1861	Jumet	Jumet	1888	
H	<b>LABENNE</b>	Gaspard	1849	Belgium	Belgium	1886	
W	N	Adèle	1851	Belgium	Belgium	1886	
c	LABENNE	Emma	1882	Belgium	Belgium	1886	
H	<b>LABENNE</b>	Joseph	1872	Belgium	Belgium	1886	
W	N	Sidonie	1874	Belgium	Belgium	1890	
H	<b>LACASSAIGNE</b>	Pierre	1859	Courcelles	Courcelles	1902	
W	VILAIN	M. Thérèse	1863	Courcelles	Courcelles	1902	
H	<b>LACASSAIGNE</b>	Vital	1857	Trazegnies	Trazegnies	1902	
W	LESSINE	M. Thérèse	1859	Trazegnies	Trazegnies	1902	
H	<b>LATINIS</b>	Alphonse	1866	Landelies	Roux	1889	
W	DEDOBELER	M. Louise	1867	Roux	Roux	1889	
c1	LATINIS	Alphonse Jr	1887	Roux	Roux	1889	
c2	LATINIS	M. Louise	1889	Roux	Roux	1889	
H	<b>LATINIS</b>	Jean-Baptiste	1870	Landelies	Roux	1903	
W	PECSMACKER	Jeannette	1870	Charleroi	Roux	1903	
c1	LATINIS	Jean-Baptiste Jr	1893	F	Roux	1903	
c2	LATINIS	Augustine	1895	Roux	Roux	1903	
c3	LATINIS	Madeleine	1896	Roux	Roux	1903	
c4	LATINIS	Denise	1900	Roux	Roux	1903	
H	<b>LATINIS</b>	Napoléon	1862	Marchienne Pont	Jumet	1888	
W	DUBOIS	Esther	1868	Marchienne Pont	Jumet	1890	
c1	GUERRERO	Flora	1894	MO.USA	*	*	
c2	LATINIS	Osée	1896	Roux	Jumet	1902	
c3	LATINIS	Rebecca	1899	Jumet	Jumet	1902	
c4	LATINIS	Zacharie	1901	Jumet	Jumet	1902	
S	<b>LATINIS</b>	Grégoire	1882	Marchienne Pont	Jumet	1888	
H	<b>LAYFETTE</b>	Joseph	1840	Belgium	Belgium	1882	
W	N	Françoise	1837	F	Belgium	1878	



## Victor Vifquain and the American Civil War - Part I

Researched and Written by Guy Gallez

Jean Baptiste Victor Vifquain, Victor for short, was born in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode (Brussels), on May 26, 1836. Victor's father, Jean-Baptiste, whose family was originally from Tournai, had studied at that city's Drawing Academy, had enlisted in Napoleon's army and later taken classes at the Ecole Polytechnique de Paris. With the fall of the Empire, he returned to Belgium, married and began to work as an engineer first for the Dutch, then, after the 1830 revolution, the Belgian government. After his wife's death, he made an acquaintance with a young seamstress from Brussels, Isabelle Devuyst. She bore him two illegitimate children, whom he recognized: Victor in 1836 and Isabelle on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1840.

Victor Vifquain wanted to join the navy. His father didn't want him to and so, in 1852, he sent a 16 year-old Victor to the United States. Here he traded with the natives. He returned to Belgium two years later, when his father died. On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1855, Victor signed up with the Belgian Military School ("Ecole Militaire Belge"). A year later he was transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Line following pranks he pulled at the school.<sup>1</sup>

Victor Vifquain left for the Western United States in 1857. He stopped in Missouri where he married Caroline Veulemans on September 9<sup>th</sup> of the same year. Caroline was born in the United States and was of Belgian stock.

In the Spring of 1858, the couple headed for Nebraska and settled about 2 miles up stream from the West Blue River, near Salt Creek, in Saline County. Victor Vifquain, was the first to settle there and was, for close to a year, the area's only inhabitant.<sup>2</sup>

Life was not easy there as Indians roamed through the whole area. Caroline wrote that " *Very early one morning that Victor was gone, she heard the sound of cattle approaching. Looking outside she saw cows frantically driven into her courtyard by a band of 300 Indians. One of the chiefs showed her his crucifix and Caroline, in turn showed him hers, thus insuring "friendly" relations. The Indians asked for an ox and nothing she could say changed their minds. She resolved to make them a gift of an ox which they promptly killed and roasted. Later on that evening, they brought her a nice piece of meat and carefully laid the cleaned hide over the fence to dry. The following morning, they moved north promising to be back in ten days, which, she gratefully recalled, they forgot to do.*"<sup>3</sup> It is possible that this incident prompted Victor Vifquain to mine

his homestead, wanting to be ready in case of an Indian attack.<sup>4</sup>

In 1860 Vifquain attended a convention held by members of the Democrat party of the territory, to designate the candidates who would represent Nebraska to the United States Congress after the elections.<sup>5</sup> Vifquain had been chosen the previous Fall by the other Saline county residents, by a vote of 16. That wasn't much but according to the 1860 Census, there was a total of 28,841 inhabitants in all of Nebraska. Saline County counted 6 families for a total of 29 people, including the children.<sup>6</sup>

In 1861, Lincoln's election precipitated the civil war. In Nebraska, Victor Vifquain decided that the military education he received in Belgium could surely be put to good use. Already in July he made a trip to New York and enlisted with the regiment of the Frenchman, Colonel Lionel Jobert D'Epineuil. This regiment would be known as the "Zouaves D'Epineuil". Victor Vifquain is made Adjutant. Also amongst this ensemble was the Belgian chaplain, Father Pierrard.<sup>7</sup>

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1862 Vifquain began the first campaign of his military career: a naval expedition to the North Carolina shores and to Roanoke Island. The 700 Zouaves of the New-York 53<sup>rd</sup> boarded a sailboat that could normally only accommodate 300. Presuming the voyage would only last, at the most six days, the Colonel was sure his men could manage in these cramped quarters for such a short time. A thick fog loomed over the departure of the expedition and the boat twice ran aground on sandy embankments. Slowed by a storm, they anchored down off Roanoke, 19 days later. The ship was almost as soon sent back to its home base, as the commanding general thought they had too many troops. The regiment started back on the sea without ever getting off the boat, but this time they were sent to a quiet area. Finally, a steam-powered ship towed them away. The excursion which was supposed to last 6 days had turned into a miserable 34 days' ordeal.<sup>8</sup>

Following Colonel D'Epineuil's mishaps, the dismantling of the 53<sup>rd</sup> was quickly given on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1862. The reason given was that "the regiment was retired from service for

<sup>4</sup> Johnson's history of Nebraska, p. 552-553

<sup>5</sup> WATKINS Albert, Illustrated History of Nebraska, from the earliest explorations to the present time Vol. I 1905 p. 423-447, Western Publishing and Engraving Company, Lincoln Nebraska

<sup>6</sup> GREGORY Annadora Foss, 1937. *Pionner Days in Crete*, Lincoln - Nebraska, State Journal Printing Company, p. 16-17

<sup>7</sup> PHISTERER Frederick, 1890. *New York in the War of the Rebellion 1861 to 1865*, Albany, Third Ed. 1912, I. B. Lyon Company, State printers, p. 2436-2441

<sup>8</sup> WHEELER and PITT, 1956. *The 53rd New York : A Zoo-Zoo Tale*, New York History 37, p. 414-431

<sup>1</sup> LEDERER André, 1985. *Victor Vifquain, pionnier du Nebraska, Général et grand citoyen américain*, Bull. Séance Acad. R. Sci. Outre-Mer, 29 (1983-3), p. 257-266

<sup>2</sup> KAURA J. W. Ed., 1962. *Saline County Nebraska History*, Beginning in 1858, Nebraska Farmer Co., Lincoln, Nebr. p. 1-7

<sup>3</sup> Newspaper clip in Victor Vifquain papers /N.S.H.S. *Mrs Caroline Vifquain, first white woman in Saline County, passes away at Lincoln Home*, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska

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breakdown of morale the incompetency of its colonel". On March 21<sup>st</sup>, it ceased to exist.<sup>9</sup>

This is where the most incredible event in Vifquain's life occurs. Here is what he told many years later. Most of the officers of the New-York 53<sup>rd</sup> had stayed in Washington, looking for another assignment. During his stay there, Vifquain met a certain Maurice de Beaumont, recently arrived from France. The young man soon gained favor with Vifquain and with two of his French officer-friends. Why couldn't they, under the cover of their French nationality, go to Richmond and do to Jefferson Davis what Dumas' hero did to General Monk: kidnap and take him back to Washington. No sooner said than done. Off to the south they were, but they were captured and taken to Richmond. Thanks to their nationality however they were able to regain their freedom. The Union troops' advance on Richmond ruined their plans and they decided to quickly escape north.<sup>10</sup>

Vifquain was then sent to Illinois and was made Adjutant in the Illinois 97th regiment of volunteers. At the beginning of October, the 97th was equipped for service. They received their guns, old Belgian style guns, with silex, modified into a percussion gun and were sent to Memphis, to become part of the Tennessee army.<sup>11</sup>

In December 1862 the Northern army went down the Mississippi and docked at Vicksburg. This was the baptism by fire for the 97th. Speaking of Victor Vifquain, Rutherford, his commanding officer said: "I owe much to my Adjutant. He was brave, discreet and energetic in the execution of all his duties, acting at the same time as adjutant and major. Duty forces me to note and report in general terms the bad behavior of Major Horton, who under the guise of illness, failed to show up on the battle field for the duration of the combats, save for one, but when an enemy shell exploded near the regiment, he spurred his horse and took refuge aboard the transport, away from danger. During the night of December 31<sup>st</sup>, the attack failed, the positions were abandoned and the army re-embarked aboard the transports.<sup>12</sup>

After the attack on Vicksburg failed, the decision was made to attack Fort Hindman on the Arkansas River, which flows into the Mississippi. This fort, occupied by the South was back of the North lines and impeded communication between Vicksburg and Memphis. The troops were in place on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1863. The mission began in the morning and by late

afternoon the victorious union entered the place Rutherford took notice of Vifquain *who was a great help*, says he, *his conduct was noble and deserves to be promoted*.<sup>13</sup> Which was done without delay, Vifquain was made a Major to replace Major Horton starting on February 7<sup>th</sup>. After the fall of the fort, the men of the 97th took advantage of the occasion. to get rid of the old guns with the new Enfields they had confiscated from the enemy. It turned into a big mess when the aide-de-camp noticed the exchange. There was no ammunition for the new weapons while there was plenty left in stock for the old ones. But it was too late, the old guns had already been shipped back North as war booty.<sup>14</sup>

As part of their plan of attack they had dug a canal through the peninsula, surrounding of Vicksburg, leading to the stronghold. Vifquain's 97th took part in this canal digging work. But on Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1863 afternoon, the dam located at the entrance of the channel collapsed, and all the work was lost

One month later, the orders arrived for a base change. This time the destination was south of Vicksburg. During the night, on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1863, the 97th crossed the Mississippi. The expedition's main body met with a strong resistance and the battle raged all day. Rutherford *complimented all his officers especially ...Major Victor Vifquain who ... displayed courage and typical energy*.<sup>15</sup> The enemy, in retreat, the Union forces pushed to Vicksburg, beat the South at the battle of Champion Hill, on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Vicksburg was under siege as early as May 19<sup>th</sup>. Vicksburg finally fell on July 4<sup>th</sup>, after a month and a half long siege.

During the biggest part of the campaign, Vifquain didn't receive news from his family, as the lines of communication between the Union army and the North had been broken Vifquain sent a letter to *L'Echo du Parlement*, a Brussels newspaper, to give news to his family and renew contact with them. The letter was published with this commentary :

*We received a rather interesting letter from a young Belgian who enlisted in the United States armies and has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He writes that, having been dismissed from the Belgian military school in 1856, at the age of 18, as a non-commissioned officer for the 5<sup>th</sup> Line, he was granted his release. He then made more mistakes which forced him to start over in America. There, he moved to the Far West, and began to trade with the Nebraska Plain Indians, and driven by the spirit of adventure he enlisted as a simple soldier, just to take part in the war.*

*Since then, says he, I have fought many battles and have achieved the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the 97th of the 2nd brigade of the 10th division of the 13<sup>th</sup> army corps, army of the West, U.S.A. My last campaign was in Vicksburg. You have probably heard that after a terrible 42 day-siege, the enemy surrendered on July 4<sup>th</sup>, anniversary date of this country's independence. There we took*

• <sup>9</sup> WHEELER Gerald E., 1956. *D'Epineuil Zouaves*, Civil War History, Vol. II n° 4, State University of Iowa

• <sup>10</sup> SMITH Jeffrey H.. Victor Vifquain and the Attempt to Capture Jefferson Davis in 1862. Military Image. January- February 1992 p. 22-23

<sup>11</sup> BILBY Joseph G. Ed., 1981. *Memoirs of Military Service of Carlos W. Colby, Comp. G 97th Illinois Infantry*, Military Images, September - October 1981, p. 24-29

• <sup>12</sup> UNITED STATES WAR DEPARTMENT, 1880-1901. *The War of the Rebellion. A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Whashington Printing Office,(O. R.) Série I Vol 17, p. 631-632

• <sup>13</sup> O.R. Vol. 19, p. 742 -743

• <sup>14</sup> Eddington William R., 1934. *William R. Eddington's history of service with Company A of the 97<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry*, Unpublished Memoirs, Vicksburg National Military Park

• <sup>15</sup> O.R. Vol. 24, p 599-600

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32,000 prisoners, 250 cannons, 70,000 guns, a hundred flags and ammunition that could sustain a 10 year siege. It was a great victory. The Confederate soldiers were commanded by General Pemberton; and the Union soldiers by General Grant with 40,000 men. The importance of this place lies in its location: The town, with its elevated position commands the Mississippi, and commerce found itself cut off between New-Orleans and Saint-Louis. On May 19th, all was conquered, after much work and terrible battles. No less than 40 forts surrounded the city, and each of these was linked to the next by trenches for the infantry. On May 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd, we charged the position. Each time we reached the ditches under the heaviest of fires; but the ditches were so deep and the parapets so high that the climb was impossible. They were dug in the ground and were of such dimensions that a breach was impossible. The enemy filled in each hole as fast as we dug them. We then began to mine. We put one leading to each fort. The work would have been finished had the enemy held on another 24 hours, and watch out for the bomb then!... But they got smart: They knew we were preparing a surprise to celebrate Independence Day. Vicksburg sitting on a mountain; its slopes are so steep; that for them to mine us was impossible. Our mines were 100 feet underground.

He ends his letter:

*For a long time, sir, I have been without news from my family: Communication was difficult with our armies, as we were right in enemy territory, which caused us to lose letters, both ways, and I would be greatly obliged to you if you could insert the following in your newspaper:*

*« The family and friends of Victor Vifquain, of this town, today Lieutenant-Colonel in the federal armies of the United States, are hereby informed that he is in good health and has survived the siege of Vicksburg. He wishes to hear from his family and friends, please send your mail to the following address to insure delivery.<sup>16</sup>*  
(to be continued)

### Oscar Blanchaer 1887 - 1972

For the "Kermis",  
booklet of the St.Boniface Belgian club Manitoba, Canada -  
submitted by Marcel Blanchaer

Some of the older Belgian Club members will recall Oscar Blanchaer as a friendly senior citizen who is still remembered by the Belgian Veterans Association as the man who brought from Belgium the Belgian flag the Association still flies in its parades. But there is more to his story . . .

Back in 1924 Oscar, accompanied by his wife Rosalia and son Marcel, came from the Minerva Motor Car Company of Antwerp to the Packard Motors in Detroit on a student visa. When the visa expired they moved across the Detroit River to Windsor Ontario. There Oscar became an active member of the Belgian Club and, still a fervent Flemish patriot, in 1928 formed the Belgian Drama Club, which sponsored a variety of Flemish cultural activities.

In 1934 the Blanchaer family moved to London, Ontario when Oscar was appointed plant manager of the London Concrete Machinery Co. It was there that his skills as a

mechanical designer blossomed and he soon became internationally known for his centrifugal water pumps.

In 1952 Rosalia and Oscar moved to Winnipeg to join their son Marcel who, after graduating in Medicine from Queen's University in 1946, had joined the Medical School of the University of Manitoba as a professor.

Soon after arriving here Oscar and Rosalia became members of the Belgian Club and Oscar joined the Belgian Veterans Association. Both remained active members until their death in 1972 and 1989 respectively.

Way back in 1909 when he was just 19 years old Oscar enlisted in the Belgian army's Second Cavalry Regiment. A lot of 'spit-and-polish' was routine because on parade the Regiment acted as the Belgian Queen's guards. But they had fun too! Here is Oscar as the "driver" during a break in the aromatic work of the "stable patrol".

### Queries:

### Corrections

#### 98-367 - TONGLET/BONEVERT

I am seeking information on the Belgian forebears of my 3x great-grandfather Pierre Joseph TONGLET. He was born around 1780 in Namur as the son of Jean Francois and Rose BONEVERT. Any info would be greatly appreciated.

**Rita A TONGLET, 868 Oakwood Dr. Terrytown, LA 70056-4511**

#### 99-368 - VANDERNAILLEN

Am searching for ancestors of Albert VANDER NAILLEN, born May 1,1828, in Ghent, Belgium and died Oct 27,1927 in Oakland,CA, USA. Albert married Victoria Herla De Verpin Oct 10,1857 in Overboelarre, Belgium and emigrated to the United States shortly thereafter. Albert was made Chevalier of the Order of Leopold of Belgium.

**Ralph E. VANDERNAILLEN, 219 Olympic Drive, Rockport, TX 78382-6831 - E-mail: [CaptVan@aol.com](mailto:CaptVan@aol.com)**